

HISTORIES OF CONCEPTS AFTER THE LINGUISTIC TURN

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Histories of concepts after the linguistic turn

Kristine Synnøve Brorson

A thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the
regulations for the degree of M.Phil

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Abstract

The turn of the nineteenth century saw a philosophy directed towards linguistic epistemology and when this influence reached academia in general it became known as the linguistic turn. In historiography this turn happened in the second half of the twentieth century and one direction was towards semantics and concepts. The focus on concepts can be seen as an essential focus in historiography after the linguistic turn because concepts carry meaning and are thus the link between language (text) and historical reality (context). A conceptual analysis is a reliable source for past meaning.

It is not only the German tradition of *Begriffsgeschichte* that can be seen as the history of concepts, although this is the traditional understanding of conceptual history. Histories of concepts can be socio-political as *Begriffsgeschichte* and works by Skinner, Pocock, Jonathan Clark and Stedman Jones, but also cultural like works by Stuart Clark, Foucault and Sandmo. In addition, there are similarities between gender history and conceptual history. Gender history is also a consequence of the linguistic turn and identity analysis of gender includes conceptual analysis. Notable academics in this field include Denise Riley, Judith Butler, John Boswell and Foucault. These approaches have in common a belief in the power of essential concepts power over society and social changes.

Reinhart Koselleck and Michel Foucault are two historians with awareness of linguistics and their own conceptual methodology. Their approaches are, nevertheless, quite different and they use conceptual history for different purposes. Koselleck's writing is linked to his ideas on modernity and he finds *Begriffsgeschichte* the most suitable method to describe changes. Modernity can be seen as a conceptualisation process. Foucault sees language as power, and thus conceptual analysis is a critical method he uses to find the truth behind given power structures. Histories of concepts will always be critical disciplines.

Declarations

I, Kristine Synnøve Brorson, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 40 000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

date 08/12/04 signature of candidate

I was admitted as a research student in September 2002 and as a candidate for the degree of M.Phil in September 2002; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2003 and 2004.

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I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of M.Phil in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

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"I sometimes wonder whether I am a scholar at all," said Miss Lydgate. "It's all clear in my head, you know, but I get muddled when I put it down on paper."

Gaudy Night, Dorothy L. Sayers

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Introduction

'History of Concepts' is a form for historiography that could only develop in a society influenced by a linguistic epistemology. This might not be obvious as 'history of concepts' has roots outside the linguistic episteme and can resemble earlier histories of ideas. 'History of Concepts' is not a school of thought, but a term I use for historians that follow a common methodology independent of each other. Conceptual history in the form of *Begriffsgeschichte* is a German phenomenon with followers in parts of continental Europe, but the historians of this school are not the only historians of concepts. It will thus be too limiting to refer to *Begriffsgeschichte* as history of concepts *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives* does. 'The editors of this book are more concerned with the fact that the practice of conceptual history did not spread from German to French and anglophone historiography rather than investigating if there could be similar conceptual approaches in these countries. This dissertation would, in contrast, like to show that 'history of concepts' developed in other countries too; this was more of a parallel development than following the same lines.

Good education has always included being well spoken, and the research on the use of words has therefore been a respected field of study from classic rhetoric, via Enlightenment etymology, to contemporary linguistics. 'History of concepts' can at a first glance seem to be a new term for 'etymology', but there is more to this approach than that. History of concepts

¹ 'Although vastly influential in German-speaking Europe, conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*) has until now received little attention in English. This genre of intellectual history differs from both the French history of *mentalités* and the Anglophone history of discourses by positing the concept – the key occupier of significant syntactical space – as the object of historical investigation.'

This quote is from the back cover of *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*. Eds. Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans and Frank van Vree (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998)

follows meaning, not term and thus 'history of meaning' would be a more appropriate term than 'etymology'. In linguistics, concepts have, in contrast to terms, connotations and denote meaning. It is necessary to have a pragmatic understanding of how a concept was used and to distinguish it from the use it has today. A history of concepts is dependent on the historical context, not only samples of earlier uses of the word. Consequently, semantic change is the main focus in the history of concepts. At first glance, a study of semantic change can look as harmless as a study of political change and war, but the *mentalité* is obviously strongly affected by what people experience and the words in use. This is not too difficult to agree upon, but a conceptual historian like Reinhart Koselleck also believes that concepts create society and that semantic changes in concepts happen prior to political change. At other times, though, political change will demand a new vocabulary.

Concepts can only be understood by reference to both their textual and contextual relations. This is pointed out by James Smith's reference to a comment by Quentin Skinner: 'Skinner has remained "unrepentant" in the belief that "there can be no histories of concepts; there can only be histories of their uses in argument".² Skinner seems afraid that a conceptual analysis will be a purely textual investigation without any historical considerations. As historians working with concepts know, concepts do not have a life of their own; they will always be in development with other aspects of language. A history of concept is therefore only achievable if the possibilities and limits of concepts are understood.

Koselleck announced his programme for *Begriffsgeschichte* in *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* in 1967, and he states there that the most important methodological criterion is that *Begriffsgeschichte* is historical-critical.³ Despite this being a manifesto for *Begriffsgeschichte*, it seems that all historians working within the framework of history of concepts see this as a historical-critical method. A linguistic approach to history seems to be an opportunity for a more complex distinction of meanings than earlier historiography. History of concepts does

²Schmidt, James; 'How historical is *Begriffsgeschichte*?' in *History of European Ideas* 25 (1999) p.9

³ Koselleck, Reinhart; 'Richtlinien für das Lexikon Politisch-Sozialer Begriffe der Neuzeit' in *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* vol. XI (1967), p.83: 'Unsere begriffsgeschichtliche Methode ist in erster Linie *historisch-kritisch*.'

therefore have the possibility of critically, through an investigation of language and context, deconstructing given truths. The power in the critique will be based on the combination of a linguistic interpretation and an accurate historical methodology. This makes it different from the history of ideas as written by Arthur O. Lovejoy, Ernst Cassirer, Alexandre Koyré and Friedrich Meinecke, which has on the whole been about universal truth based on fixed ideas.

The critical aspect of the history of concept distinguishes this approach from the earlier discussion of historical ideas of Platonic eternity. This new tactic also makes direct attack on this earlier historiography, because it is not reflective enough. Lovejoy, for example, is anti-historicist in his approach as he is more concerned with how his 'unit ideas' always exist, rather than how they interact within their historical context. Sandro Chignola writes that 'though Koselleck does not openly take a position, his critique obviously is aimed at Arthur O. Lovejoy's theoretical premises.'⁴ After the linguistic turn most historians would agree that ideas, concepts, mentality and ideologies are not entities with fixed meaning; they are living entities, developing with the historical context. Melvin Richter mentions that Lovejoy knew what was going on in Germany, such as sociology of knowledge, which Lovejoy thought could be combined with history of ideas.⁵ However, it seems to have had no influence in Lovejoy's work or the development of American history of ideas.

When Richard Rorty published *The Linguistic Turn* in 1967⁶, it summarised the thoughts of the linguistic turn in philosophy and at the same time setting a date for the linguistic turn in historiography. It would be an exaggeration to say that this book had an influential impact on the historical writing. The traditional view is to see the linguistic turn as entering historical thought from literary theory rather than directly from philosophy. This is because the linguistic turn has been associated with a set of postmodern

⁴ Chignola, Sandro; 'History of Political Thought and the History of Political Concepts: Koselleck's Proposal and Italian Research' in *History of Political Thought* 23 (2002), p.518

⁵ Richter, Melvin; 'Begriffsgeschichte and the History of Ideas' in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987), p.262

⁶ *The Linguistic Turn* ed. Richard Rorty (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1967)

thinkers such as Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes. Within historical thinking, there is a tendency to see the linguistic turn as a negative interruption from the straight line of progress in the historical discipline – which just shows that the linguistic turn is truly a postmodernist phenomenon showing that there is no such thing as progress. The anxiety is that this turn would be the end of history; not in Fukuyama's sense of the end of historical change,⁷ but the end of historiography as a discipline, its foundation of dealing with reality having been taken away. However, the linguistic turn is not only about limitations; it is also about possibilities.

There is not a consensus on how to define the linguistic turn. Georg G. Iggers writes about the linguistic turn as if it is a turn to purely textual historiography.⁸ For him, the results of the linguistic turn were structuralism, semiotics, relativism and discourse history. Iggers receives support from Alun Munslow who also focuses on textualism and equates 'the linguistic turn' with a deconstructionist or deconstructive turn, which must be seen as a very narrow definition.⁹ For John E. Toews the 'linguistic turn' is a turn from the interest in 'experience' to an interest in 'meaning'.¹⁰ He mentions both historians and philosophers in this famous review article, and for him the turn is part of a more general development of a greater focus on meaning. Richard J. Evans groups Hayden White, Frank Ankersmit, Keith Jenkins, Patrick Joyce, Dominick LaCapra, and Beverley Southgate at 'the extremes of postmodernist hyper-relativism'.¹¹ None of these mentions the terms 'concepts' or 'history of concepts' as a phenomenon of the linguistic turn, but at least Toews has the meaning of concepts in focus.

As the linguistic turn it self is an ambiguous concept it can be seen either in a broad all including way or as a narrow highly defined concept. In this thesis 'the linguistic turn' will be founded on the assumption that, due to

⁷ See Fukuyama, Francis *The end of history and the last man* (London : Hamish Hamilton, 1992)

⁸ Iggers, Georg G.; *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NE and London: Wesleyan University Press 1997) chapter 10 'The "Linguistic Turn": The End of History as a Scholarly Discipline?', pp.118-133

⁹ Munslow, Alun; *Deconstructing History* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.16

¹⁰ Toews, John E.; 'Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience' in *The American Historical Review* Vol. 92 (1987) pp. 879-907

¹¹ Evans, Richard J.; *In Defence of History* 2nd ed (London: Granta, 2000), p.254

the linguistic focus in philosophy and most academic disciplines, a linguistic epistemology¹² is the inevitable basis for all academic work – thus claiming a broad definition. This fact is accepted by each of these academics to a greater or lesser extent. 'The linguistic turn' as a narrow concept exists in a variety of ways, which will be discussed in the first chapter. Linguistic epistemology in historiography brings a new focus on the question of how to reach a historical meaning. 'History of concept' is an attempt to answer this question of historical meaning.

After the linguistic turn, historiography becomes a discipline with a different aim to earlier historical writing. As Gabrielle Spiegel puts it: 'The chief aim of modern historiography has become that of representing – rather than, as formerly, resurrecting – the past.'¹³ This can be linked to Zygmunt Bauman's definition of postmodern intellectuals as interpreters.¹⁴ All post-linguistic turn theory focuses on meaning, representation, symbols and the means of reaching these through interpretation. The linguistic turn is therefore most prominent in scientific historical discipline because the change there is more radical. In German historiography, where a hermeneutic tradition was already emphasizing the interpretation process, it is difficult to point out the change that is represented as the linguistic turn in other countries.

The topic of this dissertation was chosen because I claim to see a common methodology in the historians working on concepts. First of all, concepts seem to be a bridge between linguistic understanding and historical reality. Interpretation, and not explanation, is therefore the method in focus. This might not seem new, but when it is combined with the thought that conceptual analysis is the best line of attack because concepts are the only bridges between a historical reality and a linguistic understanding, then a 'history of concepts' emerges as a separate discipline. It is also interesting to

¹² Epistemology is the science of knowledge; a linguistic epistemological paradigm is therefore a theory where all knowledge has its foundation in language, as opposed to from fixed metaphysical ideas or from experience.

¹³ Spiegel, Gabrielle M.; 'Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time' *History and Theory* 41 (2002) p.161

¹⁴ Bauman, Zygmunt; *Legislators and Interpreters. On modernity, post-modernity and intellectuals* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p.5

see how historians who are linguistically aware, develop the same sort of history even though they cannot be seen to be related in any other way. Linguistical awareness seems to create a conceptual interest. However, those interested in concepts take some precautions when examining a purely textual historiography and are true to the more traditional, historicist contextualism.

This dissertation tries to show that history of concepts was something new, that the approach is different to the earlier history of ideas and that this new approach is dependent on linguistic epistemology. The first part, therefore, examines the theory that developed after the linguistic turn, both the textualist and the contextualist approaches and how they are linked to concepts. The second part looks at history of concepts and its relationship to political and social history, cultural and intellectual history and gender history respectively. The purpose is to show the variety of concepts possible in a conceptual analysis, but also to show how history of concept has been more or less part of the different disciplines. *Begriffsgeschichte* looks at essential concepts (*Grundbegriffe*)¹⁵, but as it will become apparent, not all concepts are easily defined as essential concepts. The third part will focus on two historians in particular; Reinhart Koselleck and Michel Foucault. For those who are conscious about conceptual method and history, there are possibilities to use this method for specific purposes. Koselleck uses this to prove the uniqueness of modernity and the conceptualisation of time in modernity. Foucault uses conceptual method critically to prove how injustice has occurred because of the language in which it has been framed.

¹⁵ I will use the term 'essential concept' for the German *Grundbegriffe* as this seems to be the tradition. However, they could have been translated basic or foundational concepts. In *Begriffsgeschichte* it is important that these concepts creates a foundation for the emergence of modern society.

Part I
Theory

1 *History, Language and Concepts*

[...]it need hardly be said that the history of historiography is not by any means to be regarded as a branch of literary criticism.¹⁶

The title of this thesis uses the term 'the linguistic turn' which suggests that this is a defined phenomenon that it is easy to classify things by. However, as mentioned in the introduction, it is more the case that there are several linguistic turns; some of them having more in common than others. What they all have in common is the inclusion of at least one linguistic aspect into a discipline's methodology creating a linguistic mode of explanation and that these turns to place from the mid 1960s to the mid 1980s. The histories of concepts thus referred to in the title are historiography written from the 1960s onwards. Some historians were earlier than others in being inspired from linguistics, literature theory, linguistic philosophy or other disciplines which already had gone through a linguistic turn. In the variety of linguistic historiography there were not all that grew an interest in concepts. This depended on the theoretical or philosophical background of the approach.

In the linguistic landscape

The linguistic turn has varied in different countries depending on the theories and philosophies by which they have been influenced. The main influences are analytical philosophy (pragmatism), poststructuralism, semiotics and hermeneutics. Theoretically it was a division between French-American textualism, based on textual structuralism in France and literary theory in North America, and an Anglo-German contextual approach to history represented by American pragmatism in Britain and hermeneutics in

¹⁶ Butterfield, Herbert; *Man on his Past. The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1955), p.3

Germany.¹⁷ In Britain there was, in addition, a later poststructuralist movement which supports the contextual view based on textual premises. Contextual history originates in previous historiography and was thus not as much disputed as textual historiography. Now, some decades after the start of the turn, the contextual project still receives more support than the textual attempt. Since the national approaches have been different, there has been more stress on differences than similarities. Few have commented that these approaches all have a root in the linguistic turn and in a linguistic episteme.

In an article from 1982, Hayden White reflects on the linguistic developments in intellectual history. He concludes that there are three paths historians have thread, and that they

divide rather evenly into those who (1) take their stand on one or more of the classical hermeneutics of the nineteenth century (Hegel, Dilthey, Marx, Freud) or their twentieth-century avatars; (2) adopt the neo-Humboldtian, philological theory of language lately revived and refined by Gadamer and Ricoeur; or (3) openly advert to the post-Saussurian theory of the linguistic sign, of which both Foucault and Derrida, though in different ways, are exponents.¹⁸

This thesis does not include the structural approaches - classified by White as (1) - as linguistic, but the reconstruction attempted by (2) and the interpretation attempted by (3). Histories of concepts is seen as being between these two approaches including both reconstruction and interpretation; the reconstruction of past discourse, interpreted to our discourse. Histories of concepts are part of the linguistic turn, first of all because 'concepts' as investigated in histories of concepts is a concept found in linguistic terminology. Histories of concepts use theory and terminology that has originated in linguistics, literature theory, political sciences and philosophy and not historiography, and must thus be seen as interdisciplinary. Secondly, histories of concepts are epistemologically dependent on linguistics. Language is seen as a foundation - the only foundation - for knowledge. This preferences interpretation over explanation in.

¹⁷ Foucault was inspired by French structuralism, Hayden White was inspired by the Canadian literary theorist Northrop Fry, Quentin Skinner was influenced by American Speech Act theory and the Koselleck has his foundation in hermeneutics although *Begriffsgeschichte*.

¹⁸ White, Hayden; 'Methodology and Ideology in Intellectual History: The Case of Henry Adams' in *Modern European Intellectual History. Reappraisals and New Perspectives* Eds. Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1982), p.283

The chronology of the development of the different paths of the linguistic turn is quite difficult to follow, as there are several parallel paths. If we start to look at the philological inspired path which, amongst others, Koselleck threads along, it developed mainly within the history of political thought. In Germany this develops from the late 1960s as a part of the reinvention of German social historiography. In Britain pragmatic, analytical philosophy influenced historians in the 1970s resulting in Pocock's *Politics, Language and Time. Essays on Political Thought and History* (1972) and Quentin Skinner's works from the late 1970s, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (1978). Britain also experienced a poststructuralist perspective of philological theory where linguistic criticism of Marxist structuralist workers history developed in the 1980s and 1990s as poststructuralist historiography with Patrick Joyce strongly involved.

Foucault is the best-known historian down the post-Saussurean path. His first work, *Madness and Civilisation*, was published in 1961, but it was *The Order of Things* – published in French in 1966 and translated to English in 1970 – which was to influence other historians. Parallel to, but also inspired by Foucault, is the development of gender history. Women's history developed from the 1960, but got more and more founded on linguistics and the discipline thus changed name to Gender History. The post-Saussurean approaches are based on semiotics and thus have in common their focus on symbols. New Cultural History – and microhistory – should be included in this. Many were involved in the broad movement called New Cultural History¹⁹. Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* was originally published in 1976, and thus started the interest in microhistory. Microhistory is based on narratives of the individual commoner. Narratives became important especially after Hayden White put narratives in the picture with *Metahistory* (1975) and this developed the interest in narratives in the early 1980s. Dominick LaCapra contributed also on textual history in the 1980s. This is however on historiography and thus describes what had

¹⁹ *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)

happened the earlier years. In his famous article from 1987, Toews look on linguistic historiography from the previous ten years.²⁰

Interpretation and linguistic structure

The founding of linguistics as an analytical and not only historical discipline was an essential step towards the linguistic turn. Ferdinand de Saussure and his *Course in General Linguistics* is thus an important figure towards the change to a linguistic episteme.²¹ Saussure developed a synchronic language theory where language was divided into two levels; *langue* and *parole*, which meant language as structure and language as uttered respectively. For most historians *parole* is the interesting level of research, but on the other hand, there are historians like Foucault who is interested in language structures. Saussure developed further a theory on the level of *langue* about the sign as a division between the signifier (*signifiant*) and the signified (*signifié*). When exposed to Saussurean linguistics some historians became interested in signifiers and their relationship with the signified. This semiotic approach gathered significant support in anthropology-inspired cultural history where symbols – signifiers – were analysed. History of concepts, on the other hand, reached for the signified; not the word, but what it denotes, that is the meaning. Historians working with concepts have attempted to combine the abstract analysis of signifier and signified, to a more attractive study of signifier and *signified* in *parole*. Koselleck shows that this combination is possible for *Begriffsgeschichte* because this tradition has roots in philosophical history of terminology, semasiology and onomasiology.²²

One of the basic understandings of Saussurean theory is that meaning is a function of language. This is to say that our common sense impression, that we articulate thoughts, is not correct. What we think is instead determined by language. 'Man moves within the framework of structures – in this case

²⁰ Toews, John E.; 'Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience' in *The American Historical Review* Vol. 92 (1987)

²¹ Saussure, Ferdinand de; *Course in General Linguistics* transl. Wade Baskin (London: Peter Owen, 1960) [First published in French in 1916]

²² Koselleck, Reinhart; 'Begriffsgeschichte and social history' in *Economy and Society* vol. 11 (1982), p. 409 Semasiology is the study of meanings of a term, word or concept and onomasiology is the study of all names or terms for a phenomenon or concept; both of these disciplines are part of linguistics.

linguistic structures – which he does not determine, but which determine him.²³ Even though we are determined by language, signifiers are arbitrary. If this linguistic understanding leads to metaphysical implications, this arbitrariness is responsible for changes in society. In a linguistic epistemology, how things are talked about matters most for how things are and how they develop. Not all historians of concepts take metaphysical implications of the linguistic episteme; at least not to the same extent as Koselleck, but *Begriffsgeschichte* values this metaphysical interpretation because it gives a possibility to understand past societies through their use of concepts. According to Saussure, *langue* constitutes how we perceive reality. This is the foundation for textual structuralism, which seems to be an alternative to an in opposition of (economic) structuralists. Textual structuralism in historiography can often be equalled to poststructuralist historiography. Even though Foucault did not see himself as a poststructuralist, his historical writing is closer to textual structuralism than structuralism in the style of the *Annales* School. For him, the order of the discourse is determined by language and meaning is something intrinsic to concepts, making concepts indicators of power structures. 'Structuralism is not a new method; it is the awakened and troubled consciousness of modern thought.'²⁴

The belief in the power of language that we find in linguistic epistemology has its foundation in the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein. He starts *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* with the proposition that 'the world is the totality of facts, not of things'.²⁵ By this he means that things do not constitute the world by themselves; they would only do so when humans have described them as facts. Since language cannot, according to Wittgenstein, exist without a community needing a form of communication, the world would not emerge as it does without language. Another influential Wittgensteinian idea is the language game that is introduced in *Philosophical Investigations*.²⁶ Language is described as a game because it is governed by rules, not laws. Grammar, semantics and syntax are rules that help us understand one other. These rules

²³ Iggers, p. 120

²⁴ Foucault, Michel; *The Order of Things*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p.226

²⁵ Wittgenstein, Ludwig; *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge, 2001) §1.1, p.5

²⁶ Wittgenstein, Ludwig; *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) § 7, p.4

developed because they are beneficial for interaction. There are two reasons why an understanding of language games is beneficial for the writing of history. First, the mastering of one language game does not necessarily make you expert in another. Just as mastering draughts will not necessarily make you a chess player, it is possible to be good at one and have knowledge about another. For historians this means that they do not necessarily have direct access to past texts because languages have developed and the rules have changed. It takes effort on the part of the historian to learn the rules of a language game of the past. Secondly, being sensitive to the existence of these rules, historians make them a worthy field of study. The division of history into discourses and epistemes is dependent on this understanding of language. Discourses are different sets of language games. Historians interested in the development of concepts are interested in the mechanisms that have created the specific language game.

Implications of the discourse

Histories of concepts use discourse analysis, but just as different sorts of discourse analyses have evolved, the different histories of concept have made use of different discourse analyses. In the historical discipline a discourse is the framework itself or part of the context, but the roots can be traced to textual analysis and rhetoric. Roland Barthes stresses the textual aspect of the discourse when he writes that 'a discourse is a long "sentence" [...], just as a sentence, allowing for certain specifications, is a short "discourse".'²⁷ His view opens a textual historiography. Despite history of concepts' historical contextualism, textualism in this form seems to have had some impact on conceptual historians. Foucault uses a structural analysis of past discourses which treats the past as a text. The technique of the discourse analysis is to look at a variety of texts and not to focus on what they are saying, but how it is said.

Historical discourse analyses are in the tradition of Thomas Kuhn's theory of paradigms. John Pocock wrote in the early 1970 that he was much

²⁷ Barthes, Roland; 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives' in *Image, Music, Text*, Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p.83

influenced by the new method of history of science represented by Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.²⁸ The theory of paradigms of intellectual discourse, instead of a continuous, organic development of history, shaped Pocock's belief in discourses as the focus of historical research. There are parallels between Kuhn's paradigms and Foucault's episteme. Thomas Flynn adds that these theories by including both discursive and non-discursive practices can be compared to Wittgenstein's language game.²⁹ By an 'episteme', Foucault means

the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems; the way in which, in each of these discursive formations, the transition to epistemologization, scientificity, and formalization are situated and operate; the distribution of these thresholds [...]; the lateral relations that may exist between epistemological figures or sciences in so far as they belong to neighbouring, but distinct, discursive practises.³⁰

Foucault underlines that these discursive relations are not structures, but a practice.³¹ This is one of the reasons Foucault did not want to be called a structuralist, and why he should not be called so. Discursive relations are something active between people, not a fixed structure, and will thus always be dynamic.

Interpretation of texts and reconstruction of context

Historiography after the linguistic turn is characterised by a less focus on explanation and more focus on reconstruction and interpretation. Explanation is often considered more scientific approach to historiography, but it is seen as less and less possible and reconstruction and interpretation is left as the only possibilities for historical knowledge. Reconstruction is connected to the recreation of historical contexts and thus one of the main features of contextualism. The interpretation of the past often can often turn

²⁸ Pocock, J. G. A.; *Politics, Language and Time. Essays on Political Thought and History* (London: Methuen & Co, 1972), p.13

²⁹ Flynn, Thomas; 'Foucault's mapping of history' in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.30

³⁰ Foucault, Michel, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge Classic, 2002), p.211

³¹ *ibid*, pp.50-1

to textualism. Most historical schools in the after the 1960s have had a combination of reconstruction and interpretation. This has made it somewhat difficult to differentiate between the ones who are traditional but linguistic and those who are postmodern. Postmodern historians do not have a division between text and context; the context is text and is thus treated textually.

Georg Iggers claims that historiography can no longer be seen as scientific with the postmodern and linguistic approach.³² This is because both textualism and contextualism supports relativism. Textualism in historiography is not only the interest in past texts, but treating things – events, actions, people, discourses, photos – textually. This is, for many historians, an intimidating turn towards relativism. However, the attention is rarely on relativism because the different theories attempt to focus on some foundation. Traditionally, the foundation was the past itself, but due to a new understanding that we do not have direct access to the past, language is seen as this needed foundation. Relativism is both created and given credibility by contextualism. Concepts are relative terms that most ideally should be discussed by a contextual approach. Since the context is responsible for the meaning, the meaning will change with changing historical surroundings. Ideas or concepts are nothing without a context because without the people to use the terms, texts referring to them or there being a common understanding of what they entail, they lose any meaning and will be useless. On the other hand, relativism alarms many academics because relativism seems to take away any foundation for arguments, and causes and consequences seem pointless. However, this is not the case, because the context is the new foundation. Mark Bevir has even implied that the foundationalism created by contextualism is too strong.³³ He would rather base historical understanding on his post-foundationalist intentionalism, which is based more on internal agreement within the historiological text, than correspondence with a context. Even in the light of Bevir's criticism, the analysis of contexts become more and more important, and the historic discipline has a new purpose.

³² Iggers, p.118

³³ Bevir, Mark; 'The Error of Linguistic Contextualism' *History and Theory* 31 (1992) pp.277

There are many ways of differentiating. In the intersection of language, linguistic theory and historiography, it is possible to see two different paths; one analyzing language to discover further historical knowledge and the other using linguistic theory in historical research. The first approach is not very different from traditional historiography as the style of the text is not different, except that language becomes the new focus, just as monarchs, nations, class or women earlier have been made the focus. The approach applying linguistic theory to history, however, changes historiography dramatically because the past is no longer treated as something unique, but merely another text. What differentiates historians from other academics working with the past, in fields such as sociology, political science, economy, ethnology and anthropology, is the dealing with the past for its own sake, as the epistemological impact of time is always of basic interest to the historian.³⁴ Historians are not only interested in how the past got us where we are today, but are also concerned with the past as a completed story. In addition historians pay attention to the uniqueness of the past, not only the attempts to find regularities that can explain our society, as a political scientist would. The historians treating history as text have not lost this feeling for the past as being the field of the historian. Therefore they are considered historians and not textual critics.

Contextualism is more influential than textualism in historiography and this is also the case in other interpretative disciplines such as art history and literary theory.³⁵ There must be a basic relation between interpretation and context, as all interpretative disciplines seems to search for truth through context. The context is the essential background knowledge necessary for any sort of understanding, as interpretation is an organic action that needs human understanding. An early form of contextualism is historicism, a direction within historiography already from the late eighteenth century. The individualisation of historical events made the historical surrounding more important, because the event could no longer be seen as an actor in a play of general laws, but something unique that only got its value and identity on its

³⁴ Knutsen, Paul; *Analytisk Narrasjon*, (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget 2001) p.21

³⁵ Gaughan, Martin; 'Art/History between the Linguistic and Pictorial "Turns" in *Image and Word. Reflection of Art and Literature from the Middle Ages to the Present* ed. Antonella Braid and Giuliana Pieri (Oxford: Legend 2003) pp.206-221

own, in its own time. The post-linguistic turn contextualism, however, is not interested in the value of the context as such. The interest lies in constructing context out of given texts because text and language are seen as the meaningful entities. The main difference between historicism and contextualism lies in different principles. In historicism, the context has intrinsic value; it is cherished as an example of pure, past human interaction. In contextualism, however, language has got intrinsic value as language is the bearer of factual reality. This is, needless to say, a result of the linguistic turn and the epistemological effects that followed.

History of concepts relates mainly to contextual history because it is searching for collective meaning in discourses. A concept is only interesting when it is used by a group of people in a discourse, creating a discourse. This definition of histories of concepts puts Koselleck and Foucault at the centre of the discipline; concentrating on collective meanings, while Skinner and the British contextualists, inspired by speech-act theory, put the agency in centre. The discourse is the context that makes a conceptual analysis possible.

At the same time, histories of concept are textual because they analyse the past by textual analysis and must thus believe the past is some part of context. A recurring theme in post-linguistic turn historiography is that historians are trapped in texts so that they cannot access, or appeal to, objects outside the text.³⁶ This is an idea culled from Jacques Derrida. In his *Of Grammatology* he states famously that 'there is nothing outside of the text'.³⁷ For most historians this is hard to swallow, because history, no matter how concerned with text, is linked to the past and other texts from the past. Conceptual historians manage to balance this by decoding the text without ignoring the context. However, deconstruction of the absolute truth of history, the way Derrida does it, does not close off the possibility of truth understood in another way; which Rayment-Pickard suggests is a contextual form of truth.³⁸ Language can be seen as organizing a new focal point and thus 'the real' can only be referred to in an interpretive experience. 'The death of the

³⁶ Bevir, Mark; 'How to be an intentionalist' *History and Theory* 41 (2002) pp.209

³⁷ Derrida, Jacques; *Of Grammatology* translated by G. C. Spivak (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1998), p.158

³⁸ Rayment-Pickard, Hugh; 'Derrida and fidelity to history', in *History of European Ideas* 28 (2002) p.17

author' has not resulted in a death of the context.³⁹ In historiography, the historical text gets the honour of being analysed for its own coherence and ability to explain.

Mark Bevir tries to make a historical approach to work between the relativity of textuality and the dogmatic factors of contextuality.

Although we can thus justify appeals to objects outside the text, we still have to acknowledge the theory-laden, and so provisional, nature of any knowledge we claim to have of such objects. Knowledge cannot be certain – based on appeals to pure facts. It must be provisional – justified by an anthropological epistemology that provides criteria in terms of which to compare different interpretations, that is, different sets of postulated historical objects.⁴⁰

By this approach, Bevir tries to combine the best form of approaches he criticises. He wants to be allowed the postmodernist critique of reality outside text and still be able to use context or at least postulate a context. It can be questioned if this is possible. Bevir's important addition to textuality is the historian's opportunity to postulate intentions and a context. Even though this can be beneficial in the development of an argument, the historian does not come nearer to the truth, which seems to be his goal. Historiography written in this way will still be a construct, an artistic achievement, rather than something scientifically provable. Bevir argues that he agrees that there are no given truths, but that he does not want to become irrationalist and therefore will reject the ideas of Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard.⁴¹

The semantic content of 'concept'

Histories of concepts are a semantic discipline as much as they are a historical discipline. Analytical linguistic semantics emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, and is thus a younger discipline than history. Semantics deals with the meaning created by language and as long as history is seen as a

³⁹ Barthes' article 'The death of the author' states that all interpretation of a text should be done to other parts of the text, not to anything outside the text. Thus the author becomes of no important for interpretation. See Barthes, Roland; 'The Death of the Author' in *Image, Music, Text*, Essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977) pp.142-8

⁴⁰ Bevir, Mark; 'A humanist critique of the archaeology of the human sciences' in *History of the Human Sciences* 15 (2002) p.212

⁴¹ Bevir, Mark; *The Logic of the History of Ideas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p.6

hermeneutic activity, both semantics and history are interpretative disciplines. However, history has had a rather organic relationship to interpretation, reliving and feeling the past and melting the horizons of understanding. Semantics is analytical in its approach and thus creates a distance between the interpreter and the subject investigated. Whereas an organic approach might be too subjective, an analytical approach can be criticised for not including enough humanity. An historical conceptual analysis tries to understand human action by an analytical study of language thus avoiding criticism of being too abstract by investigating used language and avoiding subjectivity, by finding an intersubjective interpretation.

In linguistics, concepts represent meaning and are thus one class of words. In general speech, and in historiography, 'concept' has been used interchangeably as a synonym for 'idea', 'term', 'thought' or 'notion'. In history of concepts, however, 'concept' has been defined as 'the meaning of a term'. This distinguishes history of concept from much of history of ideas. This definition makes 'concept' a modern phenomenon. Concepts are distinguished from fixed ideas that can be found earlier in philosophy. Conceptualisation of terms is a process that, according to Koselleck, took place from the Enlightenment onwards. 'To possess a concept', Skinner writes, 'is at least standardly to understand the meaning of a corresponding term (and to be able in consequence to think about the concept when instances are absent and recognise it when instances are present)'.⁴² The most important property of a concept is its adaptability. Concepts are not a fixed relationship between signifier and signified. The semiotic relationship between a symbol and a meaning can change, but it can still pertain to the same concept, making it possible to investigate a conceptual change. A concept is always a word or a phrase – it needs to be represented by something – but a word or a phrase is not necessarily a concept. Conceptual history is interested in the fact that concepts are not only ambiguous, but also change the variety of meanings it can have according to context, especially through time. Given their indistinctness and the dependency on context, concepts will always be full of

⁴² Skinner, Quentin; *Visions of Politics. Volume 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.160

tension. Both the historical background and our present surroundings must be seen as contexts, and because a concept is likely to have different meanings in these two contexts, finding a plausible interpretation of both is the first barrier for the historian.

Concepts can usually be found in a dichotomous relationship with each other, because their ambiguous nature makes it easier to define them by what they are not, or rather what they are in contrast to. 'Counterconcepts' is thus a term used by Koselleck to define two concepts that define themselves by how they correlate to each other. This correlation is one of power, as counterconcepts usually describe a 'them-and-us' or 'superior/inferior'-relationship. As a power structure, Koselleck often calls them asymmetric counterconcepts. These concepts are a negation of each other and Koselleck's reason for this is that a 'political or social agency is first constituted through concepts by means of which it circumscribes itself and hence excludes others; and therefore, by means of which it defines itself'.⁴³ Essential concepts (*Grundbegriffe*) are asymmetric counterconcepts because they can be viewed from different angles and thus acquire different meaning. Here Koselleck uses the example of employer/employee in contrast to suppressor/slave. Counterconcepts can thus be indicators of hidden relationships. This makes history of concepts a liberating discipline, rendering it possible to uncover hidden power structures through the use of counterconcepts. This is clearly visible in the 'them-and-us'-relationship that can be found in investigation of 'class', or Foucault the normal and 'The Other'. Moreover, this can also be seen in the dichotomy that Simone de Beauvoir finds in the relationship between 'man' and 'woman'.

English-speaking historians have not been united in the use of 'concept' as the unifying term for histories of concepts. This might be one of the reasons why not all history of concepts has been recognised as such. In contrast, the German school of *Begriffsgeschichte* was clear in its methodology and vocabulary and is therefore easily recognizable as a school of thought. In English – and in Norwegian – 'category' is often used instead of and as a

⁴³ Koselleck, Reinhart; *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time* transl. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1985), p.160

synonym for 'concept'. Two examples are Judith Butler's analysis of the 'category of women' and Jonathan Clark's 'category of revolution'. Both concepts and categories carry ambiguity and are attempts to classify. Erling Sandmo has highlighted this problem and writes that he – in Norwegian – uses 'category' and 'concepts' as synonyms and thus sees the construction of the category 'violence' as the synonym to the creation of the concept 'violence'.⁴⁴ Categories are perhaps potential concepts. 'Women' is an example of a category that has gone through a conceptualisation process from the 1960s and can possibly be seen as a concept now. In addition, there are other concepts which are also used to denote concepts: 'construction', 'phenomena' and 'idea'.⁴⁵ There seems to be little consistency in the use of 'concept' and related terms in English and there ought to be a clarification. However, as these terms denote the same concept – 'concept' – these discussions are all histories of concepts.

The conceptual historical methodology

'History of concepts' can be defined by certain characteristics. First, the historian writing history of concepts must be aware of Saussure's distinction between signifier and signified and thus also aware of the understanding that concepts are signifiers and not what is signified. Concepts are therefore an important carrier of meaning, and can thus be a bridge between the past and historical understanding. Secondly, because concepts are ambiguous and depend on the context in which they are used, the history of concept needs to attempt both diachronic and synchronic analysis. Diachronic analysis is important to see how the concept has developed in a shifting historical environment and a synchronic analysis is important to understand its authentic use and meaning. Thirdly, the nature of the history of concepts involves much more philosophical awareness than traditional historiography. This is because of the ambiguous nature of concepts which forces the historian to take decisions about his own interpretation of the concept in his contemporary

⁴⁴ 'A general and abstract category of action will by necessity be a concept, in the same way as an element in a state's ideological edification with difficulty can be seen as anything but a concept'.

⁴⁵ Fredric Jameson uses 'construction', Erling Sandmo suggests that 'phenomenon' can be used and Stuart Clark uses 'ideas'.

context and to be aware of this in the hermeneutical pursuit for past meanings of this concept. The first characteristic is defining 'history of concepts' as 'history of meaning' and is thus pointing out the uniqueness of this approach in comparison with other historical disciplines. Conceptual history is fully interpretative, with no aims at explanation. The second point is showing the systematic methodology which makes this a scientific academic discipline. 'History of concepts' does not try to be literary or purely philosophical, but try to keep history as a serious academic discipline, and can thus be seen as being a post-modern historical approach that cannot be targeted by Keith Windschuttle's *The Killing of History*.⁴⁶ The third aspect makes history of concepts critical and useful.

It is also possible to make use of the method from history of concepts when writing about historiography. It is possible to follow, both diachronically and synchronically, 'history of concept' and to be critical of it. As the concept has different names, it is necessary to conceptualise this concept. Writing about theories, this dissertation will also try to incorporate these theories, by conceptualizing the histories of concepts. The synchronic view constitutes the major part of this dissertation, but there are attempts to compare histories of concepts with histories of ideas and earlier conceptual history; finding the roots of this concept and phenomenon. It would also be impossible to write about the history of concepts if one did not put it, if only vaguely, in a theoretical and linguistic context. Having a conceptual methodical point of view when writing historiography makes it possible to be critical of past and one's own methods without undermining them. Post-linguistic turn writing of history and historiography must include a theorizing one's own condition of possibility.

Histories of concepts are a linguistic contextual historical approach. There are three things that are important in linguistic contextual history. First, there is the Saussurean relationship connecting signifier and signified as this relationship is the link between meaning and use and hence also language and the past. All historians of concepts have this as their main focus because

⁴⁶ Windschuttle, Keith; *The Killing of History. How Literary Critics and Social Theorists are Murdering our Past* (San Francisco: Encounter, 2000) [First edition 1996], p.1

concepts are the relationship between signifier and signified. The meaning of the concept is founded on the discourse in which they find themselves. In other words, concepts are relative to context. Secondly, concepts are powerful as creators of society and culture. The linguistic turn brought the belief that language is responsible for how we perceive the world to such an extent that it actually helps us create it. As a consequence of this, an analysis of concepts will be able to tell about the context surrounding it. In other words, the context is relative to concepts. The third point is related more indirectly to concepts: The experience of the past was dependent on the context and can thus be found in the discourses created by the concepts. How the world is perceived and how it is experienced are closely linked. With linguistic epistemology all perception is coloured by language. Of course this can be seen as a barrier, but it is also a great opportunity for the historian who then is able, through an analysis of language, to try to interpret the experience of the past.

Histories of concepts are critical disciplines. As the linguistic turn has shown us that language has power and the power structures can be uncovered by discourse analysis and conceptual inquiry. Foucault claims that a linguistic analysis will get us closer to an understanding of the past. Foucault gives language the power to control knowledge as the discourse is seen as the limit of that which it is possible to have knowledge. The discourse defines the system within which words can be structured. Chignola writes that *Begriffsgeschichte* is a history of concepts that 'rather aims at its *critique* and *deconstruction*',⁴⁷ and by this he wants to emphasise that *Begriffsgeschichte* is an active strategy of uncovering linguistic power relations. The linguistic turn has thus made historiography into a more critical discipline, and this must be taken as a critique against the view that historiography has become less scientific.

⁴⁷ Chignola, p.535

Part II

Histories of concepts

2 *Socio-political concept in political history*

*No event can be narrated, no structure represented, no process described without the use of historical concepts which make the past "conceivable."*⁴⁸

Historians who have defined themselves as conceptual historians have always worked on political and social concepts. This can thus be seen as the established history of concept. A reason for this is that *Begriffsgeschichte* and Koselleck have been considered an inspiration for many historians of concepts and this school has focused on political concepts and their relation to society. Despite *Begriffsgeschichte* being the leading school of conceptual history, there are still linguistic approaches to political history that can be classified as histories of concepts without having been motivated by this school. Another reason is that intellectual history has, especially in Britain, been interested in political theory and political concepts. In addition, historians working on political theory and language have found conceptual analysis helpful. The history of political theory was quick to adopt a linguistic focus because it was useful in acquiring greater understanding. The linguistic turn in historiography did therefore not come as a shock to this discipline. Terence Ball writes at the beginning of his book *Transforming Political Discourse: Political Theory and Critical Conceptual History* that he feels conceptual history is a discipline that stretches far back:

In a sense my subject is as old of the biblical story of Babel. It is addressed also in Thucydides' account of the revolution at Corcyra during which 'words changed their meaning', in Hobbes' chilling description of the state of nature, and in Vico's account of the linguistic origins and evolution of the old world of nations.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Koselleck (1985), p.112

⁴⁹ Ball, Terence; *Transforming Political Discourse: Political Theory and Critical Conceptual History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p.1

As can be seen from the examples of the historians with whom Ball compares himself, history of concepts is actually the history of political concepts. It is however, most natural to have some hesitation with regards to this earlier history of concepts as being true to the definition of conceptual methodology. They can instead be seen as histories of political ideas that grasp some conceptual changes happening at the time investigated.

German *Geist* and social history

German historiography has traditionally valued ideas and *Begriffsgeschichte* must be seen in this tradition. Ideas, spirit and the essence of history have occupied historical writing in Germany more than they have in Britain. Before the 1960s school of *Begriffsgeschichte* there had also been historians who defined their work as conceptual history in the genre of history of ideas, but this was inspired by Hegelian philosophy and 'concepts' was merely a substitute for 'ideas'. This approach has none of the linguistic awareness we find in histories of concepts as defined in this dissertation. *Geistesgeschichte* had traditionally a strong Platonic element and Germany thought believed in ideas and their organic development. Although histories of concepts grew out of this tradition, it was in opposition to this way of thinking. This new group of conceptual historians stated that there are no such things as fixed ideas; concepts are developing with society and they are therefore as much influenced by society as they influence society themselves.

Social history was central in German historiography both before and after the Second World War.⁵⁰ Werner Conze is usually credited with usually gets the credit for the establishment of social history in German universities after 1945. His method is of a different character from the French *Annales* as his social history gave a prominent place to both politics and history of concepts.⁵¹ His thoughts are combined with Koselleck's as the corner stones of *Begriffsgeschichte* emphasizing the link between politics, society and language. Koselleck sums this up in this way:

⁵⁰ After Karl Lamprecht's *Deutsche Geschichte* (1891) a debate on social history started in Germany and later social history was used as to try to explain the Weimar Republic. See Iggers, pp. 31-2 and 65-70

⁵¹ Richter, Melvin; *The History of Political and Social Concepts. A Critical Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1995), p.31

There is no history without societal formations and the concepts by which they define and seek to meet their challenges, whether reflexively or self-reflexively; without them, it is impossible to experience and to interpret history, to represent or to recount it. In this sense, society and language belong to the metahistorical premises without which *Geschichte* and *Historie* are unthinkable. Social-historical and conceptual-historical theories, questions, and methods thus refer to all possible areas within the discipline of history.⁵²

German social history never rejects politics and *l'histoire événementielle*. Compared with the *Annales*, the German social historical approach is interdisciplinary towards politics and language, while the French are interdisciplinary towards geography, geology and anthropology.

Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, the editors of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, are the founding fathers of *Begriffsgeschichte* in Germany. They are all educated in the German historicist tradition with strong links to traditional German history of ideas. The project is thus a fusion of historicism with the new approaches of social history and linguistic awareness. Even though the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*-project is politically opposed to old traditional *Geistesgeschichte*, as it might have been a reason for the German mentality that developed the National Social régime, the linguistic emphasis in *Begriffsgeschichte* resembles German phenomenological philosophy, more than Anglo-American analytical philosophy. Brunner saw conceptual history to be necessary for 'rescuing historicism from the liberal and national anachronisms that had distorted it'.⁵³ A reconstruction of the past's conceptual universe would make the study of the past possible. Conze was known as a theorist and was influential in developing methodology for German social history – structural history – and *Begriffsgeschichte*.⁵⁴

⁵² Koselleck, Reinhart; *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2002), pp.22-3

⁵³ Melton, James van Horn; 'From Folk History to Structural History: Otto Brunner (1898-1982) and the Radical-Conservative Roots of German Social History' in *Paths of Continuity. Central European Historiography from the 1930s to the 1950s* eds. H. Lehmann and J. v. H. Melton (Washington, DC: Cambridge University Press/ German Historical Institute, 1994), p.278

⁵⁴ Veit-Brause, Immling; 'Werner Conze (1910-1986): The Measure of History and the Historian's Measures' in *Paths of continuity: Central European historiography from the 1930's through the 1950's* ed. Hartmut Lehman and James Van Horn Melton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.308

In Britain there are two different varieties of historical interest in socio-political concepts; one based on history of political ideas and one based on social history turned linguistical. As in Germany, political ideas had been a traditional historical study in Britain. This tradition has even been stronger in Britain because the study of political theory has been as much a historical study. This tradition has stressed the individual agency rather than a collective *Geist* and this has made the study of political concepts less metaphysical. Concepts are not accredited with the same power here as in the German tradition. In British social history it is mainly the concept of 'class' that has received a linguistic, post-structuralistic investigation and these analyses will be looked at later in this chapter. The interest in class sprang out from an interest in identity and class-consciousness more than a genuine linguistic interest. A conceptual investigation was a tool rather than a new understanding. One example of this is Eric Hobsbawm's foreword to John Foster's *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* where he writes that this book

deals both with important conceptual questions (such as the nature of 'class consciousness' and 'false consciousness') with every fundamental problems of structure of society (such as the nature of the relationship between antagonistic classes and social control), and with crucial questions of nineteenth-century history, arising out of the author's major theme, 'the development and decline of a revolutionary class consciousness' in the second quarter of the century'.⁵⁵

In anglophone literature this is often seen as part of linguistic historiography, but as Hobsbawm writes this is more about the class-consciousness where the concept of 'class' is a tool both for creating and investigating class-consciousness.

Histories of political society

Koselleck believes there is a strong connection between social history and *Begriffsgeschichte*. His argument is that social history is dependent on concepts and conceptual history is dependent on a social context.⁵⁶ However, this article has not had a great impact on the broadening of an interest for

⁵⁵ Hobsbawm, Eric; 'Foreword' in John Foster; *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution. Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1974), pp.xii-xiii

⁵⁶ See in particular Koselleck (1982)

social concepts amongst the historians that normally would define themselves as conceptual historians. For Koselleck it is very important to state the relationship between social history and *Begriffsgeschichte*. He claims that they have different speeds of transformation and are based on different structures, but they are therefore dependent on each other;

the academic terminology of social history remains dependent on the history of concepts, so as to access linguistically stored experience. And equally, conceptual history remains dependent on the result of social history, so as to keep in view the difference between vanished reality and its linguistic evidence, which can never be bridged.⁵⁷

However, Koselleck always emphasises the importance of *Begriffsgeschichte*. Even though it is society and social constellations that interest conceptual historians, they have their interest founded in linguistics and have an anti-materialistic attitude to history. Social history can thus never become as important as *Begriffsgeschichte* because this is an idealistic historical view, basing history on thought. However, there seems to be the impression of James Schmidt that the project of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* has ended up being too theoretical and can only work as a guideline of what *Begriffsgeschichte* should be like.⁵⁸

Quentin Skinner writes that 'if we wish to write [history of conceptual change] it seems to me rather that we shall do well to concentrate in particular on the concepts we employ to describe and appraise what Hobbes called our artificial world, the world of politics and morality.'⁵⁹ This coincides also with his field of interests and he has been considered a historian of concepts. However, Skinner would not like to be compared to the work of Koselleck, as he does not see their methodology to be the same. This is, however, an argument for the possibilities of more than one history of concept. Skinner's utterance should therefore be taken to mean that he prefers history of political concepts to other histories of concepts.

Skinner and Koselleck have different methodologies, so if they are to be taken as representatives of the British and the German approach respectively, one must argue that political history of concepts in Britain and

⁵⁷ Koselleck, (2002), p.37

⁵⁸ Schmidt, James; 'How historical is *Begriffsgeschichte*?' in *History of European Ideas* 25 (1999) p.14

⁵⁹ Skinner, (2002), p.175

Germany both have different philosophical backgrounds and developed different methodologies. The political society plays different parts in Skinner's and Koselleck's methodologies. For Skinner, the political society is a stage where the political actor can try out his utterances. Koselleck, on the other hand, sees the political society as something that is created by the language we all use. The individual is needed in Skinner's argument as the driving force of change. In Koselleck's methodology, change is something that is created by the linguistic discourse. Conceptual change and conceptual analysis in Britain and Germany have become different because of this. A Skinnerian conceptual analysis will find the roots of the conceptual change to be a political actor, whilst a Koselleckian conceptual analysis will give a historical explanation for the linguistic changes that influenced political and societal changes.

The relationship between concepts, politics and society has not only occupied those defining themselves as historians of concepts. Conceptual history has been occupied with some of the same problems as sociology. Max Weber can possibly be seen as one of the fathers of modern sociology and his works on the German *Bürgerlichkeit* have definitively shaped the work of Habermas and Koselleck who both have written on the same topic.⁶⁰ For Weber, the emphasis was on material history, whilst Koselleck and Habermas draw more attention to concepts and mentalities respectively. Sociology is a related discipline that also was influenced by the linguistic turn, but Weber is too early to have been influenced by linguistics. However, his work can be seen to be contextualist and might have influenced discourse analysis from another angle than linguistics. As sociology and *Begriffsgeschichte* share their interest for society in modernity, it would not be surprising if their post-linguistic turn methodologies should have something in common.

Conceptual history and the linguistic turn

German *Begriffsgeschichte* believes that language presupposes language and society. Since Koselleck believes that history presupposes society and

⁶⁰ Habermas, Jürgen; *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 1991) and Koselleck, Reinhart; 'Three bürgerliche Worlds? Preliminary Theoretical-Historical Remarks on the Comparative Semantics of Civil Society in Germany, England and France' in *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2002), pp.208-217

language and thus sees them as the foundation of society, it is easy to define him as a linguistic social historian. Language collects experience and at the same time predicts the experiences that will come by categorizing them in linguistic contexts that exist before the experiences themselves. Language has the ability to absorb the knowledge, the structures of action and the challenges that is the historical situation.

Koselleck believes that history presupposes language and society.

Begriffsgeschichte was mainly a German phenomenon until the development of the History of Political and Social Concepts Group. Even though Skinner was writing history of concepts before he knew about *Begriffsgeschichte*, it is still the methodology developed in Germany that goes under the terminology of conceptual history. It seems that the only reason why there was little talk of conceptual history in anglophone historiography before this was the non-interest in reading outside one's own circle. *Begriffsgeschichte* was its own school, with supporters among those who read German, but little interest from others. Melvin Richter took the job of introducing conceptual history to Anglophone readers; first in articles in the 1980, but especially in his book *The History of Social and Political Concepts* (1995).⁶¹ By the mid-1990s more historians, on both sides of the Atlantic, had learned about German conceptual history. *Begriffsgeschichte* then became the accepted way of examining history of concepts and other attempts were not categorised as history of concepts. This developed further to an international interest in conceptual history. *Begriffsgeschichte* must be seen as the inspiration of *The History of Political and Social Concepts Group* (HPSCG). The HPSCG was founded in 1998, and it unites historians of different periods and nationalities to get together on methodological grounds.⁶² The conferences held by the HPSCG have nevertheless been less dogmatic in its methodology. Historians have participated with papers based on different conceptual approaches and have not been limited by the modernity timeframe characteristic of *Begriffsgeschichte*.

⁶¹ Richter (1995).

⁶² Programmatic statement signed at the founding meeting 18 June 1998 at the Finnish Institute in London.

Essential political concepts

Essential political concepts are, according to the *Begriffsgeschichte* historians, concepts that are essential for the construction of society. They are metaphysical entities that not only describe society, but which also are a force in the creation process of societal structures. The essential concepts are part of the political discourse that builds society. This is the link between society, politics and language. Iggers translates *Grundbegriffe* as 'basic historic concept'. However, using the term 'essential concept' the relation to linguistic understanding becomes clearer than the reference to concepts as basic or fixed ideas. Two essential concepts that have proved to be more essential than others are 'revolution' and 'class'. The first mainly in relation to political history and the latter to social history but the division between social and political history is vague in conceptual history.

'Revolution'

'Revolution' is a concept that has been investigated by many because it seems to be essential in political explanations. Historians of political concepts have found this an important indicator of the change towards modernity. 'Revolution' is a concept investigated both by Koselleck, both in *Critique and Crisis* and in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, and early modern historians as Skinner and Pocock. Terence Ball writes that

'revolution' [did not] mean for Locke and his contemporaries what it means for us. They understood a revolution to be a coming full circle, a restoration of some earlier uncorrupted condition; we understand it to be the collective overthrow of an old regime and the creation of an entirely new one.⁶³

Since a conceptual analysis is looking both at terms and at meaning, it is rather an advantage to the historians working on periods before the French Revolution. This is necessary research for the understanding of the roots of concepts. Although Skinner and Pocock are interested in early modern political concepts, most historians of political concepts work on the period of change into modernity. This is due to a shared belief that there has been a

⁶³ Ball, p.16

conceptualisation process in modern times. This also makes a division between those founding their history of concepts on *Begriffsgeschichte* and those coming from a different school of thought. Conceptualisation of terms is a process that, according to Koselleck, took place from the Enlightenment onwards. It was with the French Revolution, above all, that terms and concepts started changing meaning and concepts became active.

The French Revolution is seen as one of the main events of modern history; *the* event that makes modern society. As Richter also points out the French Revolution is considered a turning point when many concepts changed meaning or were invented, it is obviously supposed to be characteristic for the history of political and social ideas.⁶⁴ There is both continuity and discontinuity in history and those founded in *Begriffsgeschichte* believe the French Revolution is a point of discontinuity. However, as all history of conceptual change needs both a diachronic and a synchronic analysis, roots of the concepts earlier than a late eighteenth century are also investigated.

As the French Revolution is considered such an important event in history of political concepts, it is possible to ask if conceptual history is possible in the pre-modern period, and if Skinner and Pocock thus can be historians of concepts. It seems that the *Begriffsgeschichte* supporters believe the discontinuity of concepts though the French Revolution makes earlier conceptual analysis impossible. However, these historians have shown that it is possible to use the same conceptual methodology with success. Furthermore, it is not so that these early modern historians are not aware of the conceptualisation process. Pocock writes about the conceptualisation of time and which impacts that has on historical understanding.⁶⁵ Concepts are a phenomenon of modern time. When Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink analyses the concept 'nation' in revolutionary France and Germany, he points out that '[t]he genesis of a conception of a national identity followed as a result of the French Revolution and the war of liberation'.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Richter (1995), p.89

⁶⁵ Pocock, p.39

⁶⁶ Lüsebrink, Hans-Jürgen; 'Conceptual History and Conceptual Transfer: the Case of 'Nation' in Revolutionary France and Germany' in *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives* eds. Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans and Frank van Vree (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), p.117

However, the focus on the French Revolution from a linguistic point of view did not suit everybody. Lynn Hunt is also interested in the linguistic impact of 'revolution', but she claims that the politics is more important than the concept:

In the heat of debate and political conflict, the very notion of "the political" expanded and changed shape. The structure of the polity changed under the impact of increasing political participation and popular mobilization; political language, political ritual, and political organization all took on new forms and meanings. [...] Neither politics nor the concept of the political was invented by the French, but, for reasons that are still not well understood, the French managed to invest them with extraordinary emotional and symbolic significance.⁶⁷

So even if some people working with social concepts would be supporters of a linguistic episteme, this is not necessarily the general trend. Hunt argues that politics are 'an instrument for refashioning society'.⁶⁸ Even though Koselleck never would dismiss politics totally as important for social change it is the interrelationship between language, society and politics that makes development., and Hunt is not aware of this.

Political history has not become unfashionable after the linguistic turn and Jonathan Clark is a historian who has recently become interested in the concept of 'revolution'. He has produced a conceptual analysis of 'revolution' based on twentieth-century historiography. His results are nevertheless quite similar to Koselleck's. Clark argues that since the concept 'revolution' has changed it has thus been important for historical writing.⁶⁹ However, it should be brought to mind that not all historians are of this persuasion.

'Class'

'Class' is an important concept because class discussion has been a central phenomenon in modern society. The vocabulary surrounding 'class' has been influenced by Marxist historiography and though Marxist historiography would disagree on the importance of concepts, being part of the

⁶⁷ Hunt, Lynn; *Politics, Culture, & Class in the French Revolution* (London: Methuen, 1986), pp.2-3

⁶⁸ *ibid*, p.213

⁶⁹ Clark, Jonathan; *Our Shadowed Present* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), p.33

superstructure, 'class' has been thoroughly investigated. 'Class' has thus been looked at from many different historical approaches.

When Raymond Williams writes in his *Keywords* 'Class is an obviously difficult word, both in its range of meanings and in its complexity in that particular meaning where it describes a social division',⁷⁰ he is obviously more concerned about the term than the meaning. *Keywords* is close to an etymological dictionary as he follows the use of terms through history. It is interesting to note that in his entry on 'class', he is concerned with its ambiguity. However, looking at the other entries, 'class' is unique in its conceptual treatment. Nevertheless, it is 'class' and how this term is used about the concept 'working class' that occupies most of Williams' entry. He mentions that 'class' can refer to 'group', 'rank' and 'formation'.⁷¹ Skinner is sceptical about Williams' project and writes:

Williams appears, in short, to have overlooked the strongly holistic implications of the fact that, when a word changes meaning, it alters its relationship with an entire vocabulary. What this tells us about such changes is that we must be prepared to focus not on the 'normal structure' of particular words, but rather on their role in upholding complete social philosophies.⁷²

It is natural to compare 'keywords' with *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*'s 'essential concepts'. The idea behind these projects seem to be similar, namely to investigate the relationship between a core political vocabulary and society, but Williams' 'keywords' are terms, while 'essential concepts' are meaning. This makes the German inquiry deeper, and it is perhaps thus more likely to find the underlying layers of that which constructs society. Williams claims he is doing a semantic investigation, and he does, even though he does not have the same conceptual analysis as the historians of concept. It must be mentioned that Williams does not seem to be aware of the project of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* even though *Keywords* was published in 1976. It would have been natural to include *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* both when he discusses the project of Oxford

⁷⁰ Williams, Raymond; *Keywords. A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana/Croom Helm, 1976), p.51

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p.59

⁷² Skinner, (2002), p.165

English Dictionary and also in his bibliography, but Williams started his project much earlier.

E.P. Thompson was an important inspiration for a new focus. This new focus is on class-consciousness rather than linguistics. The importance is that he centres on 'class' as something socially constructed. The linguistic turn had not influenced historiography to any relevant extent when *The Making of the English Working Class* was first published in 1963. Thompson writes:

By class I understand a historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material and experience and in consciousness. I emphasize that it is a *historical* phenomenon. I do not see class as a 'structure', nor even as a 'category', but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships.⁷³

When Thompson writes that class is a "*historical* phenomenon" it seems to be a clear indication of the fact that he has a materialistic rather than a linguistic approach to history. In comparison to Thompson Williams is open about his linguistic interests writing that 'we are coming increasingly to realise that our vocabulary [...] is no second factor, but a practical and radical element in itself. To take a meaning from experience, and to try to make it active, is in fact our process of growth.'⁷⁴ Williams is also a literary historian and looks at different sorts of texts than Thompson and might therefore feel that a linguistic approach is more natural.

Joan Scott is one linguistic historian who has found Thompson linguistically interesting. Even though Thompson does not have the sufficient linguistic vocabulary his research could still be of interest for others' work on the concept of 'class'. Scott has noticed this:

Positioning himself as the carrier of historical memory, Thompson brilliantly captured the terms of working-class discourse. He did so by using concepts of class that had been formulated by the nineteenth-century movement and used in the twentieth century. *The Making of the English Working Class* endorsed and reproduced a particular concept of class. As such, it can be read as a double historical document: it gathers rich evidence about how class became understood in the past and it incorporates those meanings in its own construction of working-class history. Analyzing the contents and the textual strategies of *The making of the English Working Class*

⁷³ Thompson, E.P.; *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963), p.8

⁷⁴ Williams, Raymond; *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), p.338

thus gives insight into the historical operations of a particular idea of working class.⁷⁵

This means working on Thompson as a source for the conceptual development of 'class', and seems to have possibilities as an interesting study. However, historians still seem to be preoccupied in debating with him rather than analysing his vocabulary; except from Gareth Stedman Jones who praises Thompson for having 'freed the concept of class consciousness from any simple reduction to the development of productive [...] which cannot be reduced to the terminology of incoherent protest'.⁷⁶

As mentioned earlier, poststructuralist historians found an interest in the linguistic creation of class. Patrick Joyce is on poststructuralist historian who answers Thompson. Poststructuralist historical writing was inspired by Saussure's analysis of language in the form of *langue*. The linguistic structures are enough for historical understanding. People do not experience their life or the past as linguistic structures. Experience is therefore included as a foundation and the linguistic structure as a tool. Joyce's main purpose has been to show that classical workers' history has taken many things for granted. He has especially looked into class identity as treated by E. P. Thompson in his classic *The Making of the English Working Class*, which it must be possible to call a structuralist approach to historical writing. Thompson is mostly interested in economic and social structures as constructing history, but he also emphasises language as a contributing factor. Thompson writes about class-consciousness as a phenomenon of the nineteenth century; not only the division of classes, but also the identity and vocabulary constructing it. Joyce in his works *Visions of the People* and *Democratic Subjects*⁷⁷ argues that 'class' and class-consciousness are constructed phenomena of the twentieth century. The working class have

⁷⁵ Scott, Joan Wallach; *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p.71 She claims he really have a understanding of the concept 'class' and she refers to this quote from *The Making of the English Working Class*: "Class is defined by men as they live their own history, and in the end, this is its only definition." [Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p.11] Thus did Thompson refute the sociologists and politicians who reified a historically specific idea.

⁷⁶ Stedman Jones, Gareth; *Language of Class. Studies in Working Class History 1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.101

⁷⁷ Joyce, Patrick; *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the question of class 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in the Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

been constructed because it has been easier to deal with the working population of the eighteenth and nineteenth century that way. Joyce's main argument is that the context will be experienced differently dependent on the identity of the person's perspective, and therefore an analysis of individuals is much more beneficial for the historical understanding than a broader structural analysis. Joyce has been criticised for not bringing anything constructively new into social history,⁷⁸ but what he brings into historiography is an interest in new sources.

Whilst most research on 'class' has been done in relation to the working classes, Jürgen Kocka has undertaken a conceptual analysis of 'class' in relation to the middle classes. Just as Koselleck has pointed out the different conceptual meaning of *bürger*, *citoyen* and 'citizen', Kocka has been taken by the problem of the middle classes because of the difference between the concepts of 'lower middle class', *Mittelstand* and *classes moyennes*.⁷⁹ Despite Kocka's awareness of concepts as creators of meaning, identity and society, linguistics does not seem to be on his agenda. Iggers describe Kocka as a structuralist class historian and Kocka himself mentions interests in economical, social, cultural and political aspects.⁸⁰ Kocka's analysis is mainly on American white-collar workers. The concept of this middle class group has been more linguistically analysed by Gunter Barth in his *City People*.⁸¹ Where Koselleck accentuates the political discourse as the linguistic creator of society, Barth give weight to the discourse of popular culture and especially the press. Barth's argument is constructivist, but he would hardly categorise himself as a conceptual historian. Neither Kocka nor Barth falls perfectly in to the classification of historians of concepts outlined in the theory chapter. Kocka focuses on concepts, but does not seem to be particularly linguistically aware; however, he has the historical critical attitude looking at how the class identity created by different concepts has legitimated different political regimes. Barth,

⁷⁸ Mayfield, David and Susan Thorn; 'Social history and its discontents: Gareth Stedman Jones and the politics of language' in *Social History* 17 (1992), pp.165-188

⁷⁹ Kocka, Jürgen; *White Collar Workers in America 1890-1940. A Socio-Political History in an International Perspective* (Beverly Hill and London: Sage, 1980), p.6

⁸⁰ Iggers, p.73 and Kocka, p.15

⁸¹ Barth, Gunter; *City People. The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980)

on the other hand, seems to have the belief in the power of language, but he uses language as a tool to understand identity; conceptual change creates identity.

Diversity and ongoing activity

Although 'revolution' and 'class' both have been the subject of conceptual analysis, the analyses have been quite different because of the historiographical context in which they stand. First of all, 'revolution' has caught the interest of political theorists, because the study of the concept 'revolution' has the possibility of telling how political thought has changed. On the other hand, 'class' has caught the attention from social historians wanting to reach those who are being categorised within classes, especially the working classes. Both 'revolution' and 'class' have an inherent value as a key to previous vocabulary and understanding. This is the essence of the history of political and social concepts, to reach the thoughts of previous social and political discourses through analysis of conceptual change. It seems that the interest in political concepts came first because of the relation to history of political ideas both in Britain and in the German school of *Begriffsgeschichte*. Although Koselleck states a relationship between political concepts and social history, social history must be seen as taking the biggest step when incorporating linguistic analysis. Social history does not only work on society, but has also looked for causal explanation for social changes. A conceptual approach is founded on interpretation, not explanation, and linguistic rather than social objects.

Melvin Richter asks for a project like *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* in English because he sees how useful such a project has been both for researchers and for the general German reader. However, he does not see the possibility of such a project because of three objections:

- (1) that any such enterprise is fatally flawed by its covert attempt to revive a version of German idealism long since discredited by English-speaking linguists or analytical philosophers; (2) that equivalent conceptual histories are available in reference works written in English; (3) that in addition to such reference works, those concerned with the history of words, terms,

and concepts in the English language have long possessed a great work, the *Oxford English Dictionary*.⁸²

These objections explain why such a project has not been carried out in English, but they are not good reasons why it should not be carried out. Richter continues, in his argument, to explain that a history of political and social concepts would provide a more historical approach than what these reference works has been able to. The advantages of such a project would, according to Richter, 'well justify the effort'.⁸³

The interest in the history of socio-political concepts seems to be increasing. This is mainly due to the organisation of the History of Political Concepts Group. The interest and the participation at the HPSCG conferences show a development of this methodology. So far there has been a variety of approaches that has been included at these conferences, but this interest might put a focus on the development of this methodology as a discipline of its own.

⁸² Richter (1995), p.144

⁸³ *ibid*, p.160

3 *Concepts and cultural history*

*Culture as a category of social life has itself been conceptualized in a number of different ways.*⁸⁴

The essence of history of cultural concepts is the study of concepts that have been essential to cultural society. Concepts that have influenced how the world has been perceived, but which might not have had a direct political power. However, the strong interlink between politics, society, culture and language has become more and more clear as interdisciplinary historical disciplines have developed over the last decades. The relationship between culture, history and language is an old one, each of which represents the academic disciplines of arts. Culture has, nevertheless, not been investigated with conceptual methods until the end of the twentieth century. There was no cultural historical discipline that could be compared to the history of political ideas as a driving force for conceptual history within the cultural studies. The interpretation methods of cultural history have developed as the focus of cultural history has changed. Cultural history as we know it today is a new discipline which also has developed alongside linguistic historiography from the mid-twentieth century. It has been occupied with cultural identity and cultural experience in the broad sense, and is very different from Jacob Burckhardt's cultural history of the nineteenth century. The twentieth century has not brought an end to the study of high culture, but rather extended the history of culture to include all of human construction.

Textual structures and cultural history

As *Begriffsgeschichte* and Koselleck have been sources of inspiration for historians of political and social concepts, Foucault has been the inspiration for

⁸⁴ Sewell, William H.; 'The Concept(s) of Culture' in *Beyond the Cultural Turn* eds Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p.40

historians of cultural concepts. Foucault gave a new perspective on the relationship between language power and society, and he was interested in cultural interrelations rather than political relations. Within cultural history there has been an interest in minority culture as well as popular culture. Many of Foucault's books have been about the mechanism that divide the minority culture of the others from the accepted culture. Foucault's discourse analysis is a mild form of textuality. This methodology has therefore been of inspiration to historians seeing that culture has to be interpreted as a text. As Foucault is interested in power structures, this is an aspect where his methodology can be seen to be very useful. Later in this chapter one will see how Foucault has influenced the study of 'violence' and 'witchcraft' – two concepts of interest to both cultural and juridical historians as power relations are clearly involved. The same methodology could be used for 'child' as well.

Foucault has two different ways of treating concepts. First, he investigates concepts that are already under discussion such as 'man' and 'power'. The treatment of these concepts can be seen as a methodological individualism.⁸⁵ 'Man' was his interest in the early archaeological period and 'power' was the interest of genealogy.⁸⁶ Secondly, he invents, or takes an innovative look at, new concepts such as 'archive', 'episteme' and 'madness' – concepts from a vocabulary that develops through the historical conceptualisation process. Foucault does not define concepts, but he writes about formation of concepts in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. It is clear, however, that concepts, as he treats them, are words with a powerful meaning that refer to something abstract and thus will change according to context. As Munslow points out: 'Foucault goes so far as to suggest that the concept of the empirical fact is nothing more than a naïve discourse of nineteenth century science.'⁸⁷ He thus has a much more sceptical attitude to concepts than Koselleck. Compared with Koselleck, Foucault does not believe in the power of concepts. Concepts are indicators of the mentality of a society rather than the fundamental bricks.

Patricia O'Brian believes that many post-war social historians shared this concern for cultural formation, which Foucault links to linguistics and

⁸⁵ Flynn, p.39

⁸⁶ McNay, Lois; *Foucault. A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge; Polity Press, 1994), p.3

⁸⁷ Munslow p.127

conceptual formation. This is where she sees the promising potential in his work.

Power/knowledge is a fact of power/culture. The fragmentation, segmentation, "capillarity" of the work of contemporary post-Marxist cultural historians – those who study women, villages, courts, families, prisons, adultery, odors, epidemics, the welfare state, and the like – can be accommodated in his universe, in which technologies of power are rooted in multiple serial institutions, in which technologies of power are rooted in multiple serial institutions, in which subjects, sex, individuals, the soul, Western culture itself are viewed through ruptures in discourses.⁸⁸

It is in this way that cultural historians have been interested in concepts and a linguistic perspective. O'Brian notices that cultural history becomes interested in these cultural concepts because of Foucault's methodology of discourse analysis. However, she seems to fail to see the relationship between a conceptual analysis and the discourse. Her remarks are possibly representative of what social historians have noticed and similarly it is fair to say that Foucault did not have any direct influence on social history and its treatment of concepts. Nevertheless, he has been an indirect influence creating a discourse where it is seen as beneficial to talk about concepts, discourse and power also in cultural and social history.

Cultural history developed differently from the history of socio-political concepts. The shift from history of political ideas to the history of political and social concepts was a natural development when linguistics developed conceptual understanding. Cultural history, however, should be seen differently. Even though disciplines such as history of art, theatre and literature have been studied for centuries and to some extent must be seen as cultural history, something else that implied by the term 'cultural history'. Cultural history is a discipline that developed from the mid-twentieth century in parallel to history of concepts, and focuses on all forms of culture, using anthropological methodology through time instead of space. Just as anthropology embraced structuralism and textuality after the linguistic turn, cultural history was the historical discipline which welcomed textuality most.

⁸⁸ O'Brian, Patricia; 'Foucault's History of Culture' in *The New Cultural History* ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp.43-4

Aletta Biersack has noticed how history and anthropology developed during this time of change that

all roads appear to converge on literary theory. The shift from "social history" (inspired, in part, by anthropology) to a concern with historical texts and their literary properties – associated with the work of Dominick LaCapra and Hayden White [...] – is paralleled in anthropology by a shift in focus from culture-as-text (interpretation's muse) to anthropological texts (ethnographies) and their rhetorical strategies.⁸⁹

Textualist historiography – and anthropology – emphasise interpretation instead of explanation and is thus well suited for history of concepts. Richard Biernacki has perhaps gone too far into the textualist analysis: 'But grasping culture as an ontological ground enables the new cultural historians to combine this formally ironic stance with a reliance on synecdoche inside their own scholarly game.'⁹⁰ The question is then if cultural historians are interested in cultural concepts to understand past societies.

The twentieth century saw the rise of several new historical disciplines. Cultural history had been written at least since the nineteenth century, but the form that developed from the mid-twentieth century was of a different kind. Just as intellectual history had turned from the works of great men to *mentalité*, cultural history now approaches the culture of the people not only the high culture of the elite. The writing of microhistory is generally described in the collective term of New Cultural History. However, the cultural history that is in any way related to concepts, is the cultural history that is similar to *l'histoire des mentalités*. Different disciplines within history differentiate from each other not only in *what* they study as much as they differ in *how* they study. It will always be important for a new discipline to make its methodological claims clear. Cultural historians tried many of the historical theories which were present in mid-twentieth-century academic discussions, amongst them different linguistic theories. Unfortunately for history of concepts, it was semiotics rather than semantics that interested the cultural historians. Semiotics

⁸⁹ Biersack, Aletta; 'Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond' in *The New Cultural History* ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p.73

⁹⁰ Biernacki, Richard; 'Method and Metaphor after the New Cultural History' in *Beyond the Cultural Turn* eds V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p.70

opened up the study of cultural object as signs; signs with different and multiple meanings. This led to a wide study of cultural objects, including words and symbols, looked upon in a cultural system. This analysis is, however, on a different level to conceptual analysis. Looking back at Saussure, semiotics is a study within *langue*, while conceptual analysis is within *parole*. These two approaches are not compatible. Not all cultural historians were fixed to semiotic analysis, and it is therefore necessary to look at the differences within cultural history to cover those who looked at concepts.

History of concepts is contextualist because it sees concepts as cultural phenomena that operate relatively and vary according to culture and time. This understanding is also shared with New Historicism. New Historicism is a movement in literary theory, but as we have seen in earlier chapters, there have been strong links between history and literary theory after the linguistic turn. New Historicism is 'concerned with finding the creative power which shapes literary works *outside* the narrow boundaries in which it had hitherto been located, as well as *within* those boundaries.'⁹¹ This is a belief in a special relationship between text and context that is particularly relevant to discourse analysis. Although this is originally a discipline within literary history, concepts are also both ruled by their narrow relationship with the text and the wider relationship with the discursive context. This methodology might have reached the history of cultural concepts because of a connection between cultural history and literary history, and constitute the synchronic aspect of conceptual history.

Culture without concepts

In *Beyond the Cultural Turn* from 1999 it is clear that few of the historians have a conceptual understanding.⁹² Perhaps it is an answer to the textualist approach that was popular twenty-five years earlier. As shown in chapter one, there was a growing contextualist interest both in history, social sciences and literary theory after, textualism and structuralism had manifested itself for a

⁹¹ Gallagher, Catherine and Stephen Greenblatt; *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p.12

⁹² *Beyond the Cultural Turn* V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) The historians represented in this book are vague on what the linguistic or cultural turn is. They are linguistically aware, but have not connected this to concepts.

few decades. Margaret R. Somers finds concepts to be of interest because they are 'history-laden' and thus of great help for historians. She writes:

When we explore the historical life of concepts, the historicity of our conceptual semantics, we are likely to find that they themselves have histories of contestation, transformation, and social relationships – histories not unlike the more straightforwardly social phenomena that we study regularly.⁹³

However, Somers does not seem to have the same understanding as the historians of political and social concepts, namely that concepts constitute society and thus are more important for our possibility to interpret and understand. Instead concepts are social and cultural entities. There might be an essential difference between political and cultural concepts, but it rather seems as if the difference springs from our difference in expectation to cultural and political concepts. So, cultural, social and political concepts might be as essential concepts and as much part of the social foundation.

Culture is the foundation of language and a focus on language is also a focus on culture. In cultural history it is more common to talk about the cultural turn than the linguistic turn, but they mean more or less the same process. Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt have difficulties in defining both the cultural and the linguistic turn in their introduction to *Beyond the Cultural Turn*. They try to see the 'cultural turn'-historians as one school of thought, but there is quite a lot of variety within this group of historians. They have in common a linguistic interest and awareness, and work with anything that can broadly be defined as cultural. A cultural turn is a turn from politics and economic structures and towards a linguistic and cultural context.

New Cultural history is much more vague and is not really a united school of thought. New Cultural History writes microhistory, like *The Great Cat Massacre*. It is inspired by *Annales* and history of *mentalités*, and also by anthropology. Lynn Hunt tried to establish this as an approach by making some sort of manifesto in *The New Cultural History* (1989).⁹⁴ Other historians

⁹³ Somers, Margaret R.; 'The Privatization of Citizenship: How to Unthink Knowledge Culture' in *Beyond the Cultural Turn* eds V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p.135

⁹⁴ *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)

who share this approach are Robert Darnton with *The Great Cat Massacre* and Natalie Zemon Davis – and the anthropologist Clifford Geertz who sees culture as texts that can be read (the textualist approach) – all of them teaching at Princeton. Davis' *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* tells about the meanings of gifts, but in a semiotic rather than semantic way although she looks at this concept through semantic analysis when writing that 'the ancient *don* and the medieval *présent* were the most frequently employed, the first more formal than the second'.⁹⁵ These histories have borrowed ideas from semiotics and take much care in the interpreting of signs. This can be seen as a textualist approach. These signs create an order, just as Foucault's episteme, and these orders will constitute historical entities categorised by identities, social groups and scientific disciplines.⁹⁶ The importance of signs must be seen in relation to concept since both are carriers of meaning and relative to context. It seems therefore that history of concepts is a very integrated part of post-linguistic turn historiography. Sandmo positions himself in a historical tradition that runs through *Annales* history of mentalities, through cultural history and New Historicism.

As English does not have its own term for the history of collective mental consciousness, we tend to talk of *mentalités* history as a reference to the *Annales* who were the first to talk of *l'histoire des mentalités*. *Mentalité* was, for the *Annales*, another layer in their historical understanding, just as economy, politics and cultural landscape had stories to tell about the past. Now, this genre must be seen to be part of cultural history as the mentality is our strongest shared cultural object. At the same time it has its roots in intellectual history and this is where we find the link to conceptual history. There were several *mentalité Annales* historians writing, but closest to histories of concepts might we find Robert Mandrou's works. In *Introduction to Modern France 1500-1640*, he makes a conceptual analysis of 'Man' in this period.⁹⁷ Conceptual

⁹⁵ Davies, Natalie, Zemon; *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.22

⁹⁶ Sandmo, Erling *Voldssamfunnets undergang. Om disiplineringen av Norge på 1600-tallet* [The Decline of the society of violence. On the discipline of Norway in the 17th Century] (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1999), p.83

⁹⁷ Mandrou, Robert; *Introduction to modern France 1500-1640: an essay in historical psychology* translated by R.E. Hallmark. (London : E. Arnold, 1975) [First published in French in 1961]

analysis can be a means of reaching the *mentalité*. Even though Mandrou might be the historian of *mentalité* who closest resembles history of concepts, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch were more influential in developing French *l'histoire des mentalités*. Foucault continues this tradition and at least *The Order of Things* and *Archaeology of Knowledge* must be seen as a work of *mentalité* history. As we will see, there are several concepts in which he is interested, amongst them 'Man', 'Science', 'Knowledge' and 'Power'. He sees these concepts as being important for social and cultural formation.

Concepts defining cultural man

The essence of culture is difficult to describe, but Raymond Williams has made an attempt. *Culture and Society 1780-1950* from 1958 must be classified as history of concepts. Williams' thesis is that there is in the period he describes, a number of words that have been of great importance for societal development,

came for the first time into common English use, or, where they had already been generally used in the language, acquired new and important meanings. There is in fact a general pattern of change in these words, and this can be used as a special kind of map by which it is possible to look again at those wider changes in life and thought to which the changes in language evidently refer. Five words are the key points from which this map can be drawn. They are *industry, democracy, class, art and culture*.⁹⁸

The book is mainly about the concept 'culture', which he sees to be important for the construction of society. Williams uses 'idea' and not 'concept', but he does not use a linguistic vocabulary. Though he sees these concepts as being changeable and always in a flux; he states that meaning also changes. He does not here have the same thorough synchronic and diachronic investigation that can be found later. His investigations are not as systematic; they rather indicate changes. According to Boutcher, Williams' questions cross the borders of social and cultural history with his study of canonical texts and his works must be seen in the tradition started by French and German intellectuals in the 1930s.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Williams (1967), p.xiii

⁹⁹ Boutcher, Warren; 'The Analysis of Culture Revisited: Pure Texts, Applied Texts, Literary Historicisms, Cultural Histories' in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003), p.489

Man'

Michel Foucault's *The Order of things* is a history of the concept 'Man'. Foucault looks at the development of the human sciences from the Enlightenment to modern society. As 'Man' is related to subjectivity, the roots cannot be traced earlier than Enlightenment. Foucault states his position thus:

When natural history becomes biology, when the analysis of wealth becomes economics, when, above all, reflection upon language becomes philology, and Classical *discourse*, in which being and representation found their common locus, is eclipsed, then in the profound upheaval of such an archaeological mutation, man appears in his ambiguous position as an object of knowledge and as a subject that knows: enslaved sovereign, observed spectator, he appears in the place belonging to the king, which was assigned to him in advance by *Las Meninas*, but from which his real presence has so long been excluded.¹⁰⁰

This is a view in opposition to Lovejoy's treatment of the unit idea *Man* dating back to Ancient Greece, where 'Man' is seen as a fixed idea. This shows that Foucault's analysis really is a conceptual analysis, based on conceptual change. The term 'Man' was first conceptualised in the Enlightenment, but is not fully a concept until modern nineteenth-century thought when 'the perpetual relation of the *cogito* to the unthought, the retreat and return of the origin, define for us man's mode of being'.¹⁰¹ Foucault was also influenced by conceptual philosophers like Canguilhem, Bachelard, Jean Caveillès, and Alexandre Koyré, 'who fundamentally [...] confronted the opposite philosophical tradition of experience and sense, as it was embodied in Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, the existentialists and phenomenologists'.¹⁰²

Foucault's histories make use of concept as a critical and philosophical cultural history, but he find complications in using 'Man' for this philosophical project because the human sciences have not managed to get round the problem without using this concept of 'Man' that was not present before the modern episteme.

¹⁰⁰ Foucault (2002 I), p.340

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.365

¹⁰² Eribon, Didier; *Michel Foucault* translated by Betsy Wing (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p.104

However, it is easy to understand why every time one tries to use the human sciences to philosophize, to pour back into the space of thought what one has been able to learn of man, one finds oneself imitating the philosophical posture of the eighteenth century, in which, nevertheless, man had no place; for by extending the domain of knowledge about man beyond itself, and thus taking up one's position once more in a philosophy of the Classical type.¹⁰³

Foucault influenced a more critical cultural history, even though he still saw difficulties and faults. Although his works has inspired many, those inspired have not always understood the consequences of its break with traditional social-historical models.¹⁰⁴

Although Clifford Geertz cannot be classified as a historian of concepts, his conceptual analysis of 'Man' is still interesting. As an anthropologist, Geertz looks at the concept of 'Man' through different cultures rather than through time. However, it is interesting to compare his observations to Foucault's. Geertz's point 'is not that there are no generalisations that can be made about man as man, save that he is a most various animal, or that the study of culture has nothing to contribute towards the uncovering of such generalisations.' Instead he claims that

'generalizations are not to be discovered through a Baconian search for cultural universals, a kind of public-opinion polling of the world's peoples in search of *consensus gentium* that does not in fact exist, and, further, that the attempt to do so leads us to precisely the sort of relativism the whole approach was expressly designed to avoid.'¹⁰⁵

Foucault is aware from the start that there will not be a consensus surrounding the meaning of the term 'man' as he shows in his later studies on power, that some men are more equal than others. As language is power, the conceptualisation of 'Man' will also be a question of power. He writes that

¹⁰³ Foucault (2002 I), pp.396-7

¹⁰⁴ O'Brian, p.27

¹⁰⁵ Geertz, Clifford; *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Book, 1973), p.40

as a result of the importance of linguistics and of its application to the knowledge of man, the question of the being of language, which we have seen, is so intimately linked with the fundamental problems of our culture, reappears in all its enigmatic insistence. With the continually extended use of linguistic categories, it is a question of growing importance, since we must henceforth ask ourselves what language must be in order to structure this way what is nevertheless not in itself either word or discourse, and in order to articulate itself on the pure forms of knowledge.¹⁰⁶

Philippe Ariès' conceptual analysis of 'Childhood' in *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) can be seen as another attempt at understanding the concept of 'Man'. However, Ariès is not using linguistics for his conceptual analysis. He is using pictures, looking at how they symbolise 'Man' in general and 'children' in particular. From his pictorial investigations he can remark that "The density of society left no room for the family. Not that the family did not exist as a reality: it would be paradoxical to deny that it did. But it did not exist as a concept."¹⁰⁷ Ariès is looking for conceptual changes as the essence of society, and he finds this. Jenssen comments that Ariès' methodology can be categorised as genealogy and that change is therefore accentuated.¹⁰⁸

'Witchcraft', 'demonology'

Stuart Clark's *Thinking with Demons. The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*¹⁰⁹ is a clear example of how textualist, linguistic historiography is conceptual history without defining itself as that. One should not be confused with Clark's terminology of using the *idea* of witchcraft as it is not a fixed idea he is investigating, but a changing concept. Clark is aware of the developments that have been going on in linguistics and start his book with 150 pages on language as used in early modern discourse. It is the linguistic discourse that is in focus in Clark's book, but even though he can be seen to be a discourse historian, he is clearly influenced by linguistic philosophy and is perhaps a textualist. John Bossy defines him as a clear post-linguistic turn historian and

¹⁰⁶ Foucault (2002 I), p. 417

¹⁰⁷ Ariès, Philippe; *Centuries of Childhood. A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1962), pp.405-6

¹⁰⁸ Jenssen, Dag; *Mentalité : en vitenskapsteoretiske studie i mentalitetshistoriske tekster av Ariès, Mandrou og Vovelle* [Mentalité: a scientific-theoretical analysis of *l'histoire mentalité* texts by Ariès, Mandrou and Vovelle] (Bergen: Ariadne, 1990), p.64

¹⁰⁹ Clark, Stuart; *Thinking with Demons. The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

also defines him within the textualist rhetorical turn.¹¹⁰ Given that Clark sees witchcraft to be on a different level than the real world, other laws of causation can always explain the chain of causation explained by witchcraft. Witchcraft is a topic that Clark investigates as if it were fiction. He can thus make use of methodology from literary theory and philosophy. Clark writes that after a Saussurean linguistic turn it is the coherence of signs that counts, not reference to the real world. Clark therefore has two reasons for textualism; first, that he believes the history already is a game of referents/signifiers/concepts and he is just joining this way of writing history. There are no other philosophically legitimate ways of writing history. Secondly, witchcraft is an excellent topic for this kind of research because it works with the real world just as fiction does – explaining things without really telling “the truth”.

One example of Clark's textualism is his treatment of the connection between women and witches. In explaining why women were classified as witches he looks at the rhetorical effects of duality and contrasts. This division of male/female and good/evil seems to have as much a poetic means as being based in social or political reality.

There are other recurring linguistic and conceptual features of the arguments about women that confirm their deep reliance on binary classification. One of them is a dependence on antithesis as a rhetorical figure – an aspect of what most commentators have seen as the highly stylized and artificial character of the debate. In medieval letters, the nature of women was a popular theme for rhetorical exercises, and this seems true of the following age as well.¹¹¹

Clark believes there was a certain special linguistic era in early modern Europe that appreciated a game with words.¹¹² There was more of an awareness of language than in any other period. With the power of language Bossy sees the originality in the thesis that ‘Demonology and the judicial persecution of witches wax (and wane) with a theocratic conception of the state which produces such doctrines as the divine right of kings’.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Bossy, John; ‘Thinking with Clark’ in *Past and Present* vol. 166 (2000), p.243

¹¹¹ Clark (1997), p.124

¹¹² *ibid.*, p.94

¹¹³ Bossy, p.246

This divine right was of course also linguistically created and expressed. Perhaps their understanding of the world was more poetic and rhetorical than how we perceive the world today. Clark describes the poetic polarity and duality that existed in the language¹¹⁴ and this seems also to be linked with Foucault's 'Otherness'; there is one rational easily described world and then it is the other. In early modern Europe this otherness was, according to Clark, demonology, and, in the case of women, witchcraft. As other historians have remarked the importance of Clark's emphasis of the fact that these people really believed in magic and thus live in a different reality and linguistic context than became evident in later age.¹¹⁵ As Bossy sees it:

The book is about the idea of witchcraft, not about the doings of witches, their victims and accusers in real life; its idea about this idea is that, as William Lamont has claimed for millennialism in England, and Osvaldo Raggio for banditry in Italy, it is normal.¹¹⁶

When it comes to defining Clark within the category of history of concepts, he never says he is working with concepts, but his study is of the concept of demonology. The terms and vocabulary differ, and so does the meaning. However, Clark deals well with this using a discourse analysis of the early modern vocabulary, but also by looking at the changes that happened in the centuries investigated. This will account for the synchronic and diachronic analysis. Clark is also very philosophically aware and knows the consequences proved by a linguistic approach to history. It might be because of this that he chose to work with demonology, which is very far from contemporary logic. He has also continued working within the topic of language and witchcraft.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Clark (1997), pp.31-2

¹¹⁵ Sandmo, Erling; 'Mer og mindre sannhet' [More or less truth] in *Historisk Tidsskrift* (1999), pp.387-399 p.391

¹¹⁶ Bossy, p.243 William Lamont is linguistically aware, but he is in general more interested in the movement of the phenomenon of Puritanism, than its linguistic/semantical history. However, he is very much aware that 'puritan' is "an unstable term" or ambiguous concept. See Lamont, William; *Puritanism and historical controversy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), p.1

¹¹⁷ He has afterwards edited *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) and *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture* (New York: St. Martin's, 2001)

'Violence' and 'Honour'

Erling Sandmo has written mainly on Norwegian juridical history in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Just as he is very concerned with the context surrounding his historical subjects, he is always careful to state his own context and background. He never uses 'history of concepts' but he knows well works of *Begriffsgeschichte*. Sandmo is sensitive to language and meaning, and he starts *Voldssamfunnets undergang* [The Decline of the Society of Violence] with a description of his own uncertainty of what 'violence' is.¹¹⁸ He is also aware of the possible change in meaning and vocabulary of violence from the early modern times and today. He thus wants to investigate the first half of the seventeenth century to see if he can find a period of change from an early modern to a modern perception of 'violence'. Sandmo investigates the early seventeenth century because he believes it to be a period of change. He has undertaken previous works on the eighteenth century and would like to show that this society is different. His investigation is limited to two regions where legal documents have been carefully preserved. Even though 'violence' is Sandmo's main concept of interest, 'honour', 'truth' and 'public sphere' (*offentlighet*) is also investigated as these four concepts as they can be seen to be strongly interlinked in this society.

Sandmo's premise is that our understanding of truth is different from that of the seventeenth century. At that time honour and honesty were linked; telling the truth would be defined by behaving honourably. He can therefore start with an analysis of the concept 'honour'. This analysis is contextualist and relativistic. He understands honour as something that will be ambiguous because it is always changing in a society, but nevertheless it is and was used and would thus have a meaning in an "articulation field"; a group having the same understanding and vocabulary. This approach is inspired by David Chaney.¹¹⁹ This is also very similar to Foucault's archaeology of knowledge

¹¹⁸ See Sandmo, Erling: *Voldssamfunnets undergang. Om disiplineringen av Norge på 1600-tallet* [The Decline of the society of violence. On the discipline of Norway in the 17th Century] (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1999)

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.99

where the episteme is a group with common knowledge and thus also a common vocabulary.¹²⁰

There is a characteristic of *Begriffsgeschichte* that it includes both an onasiological and a semiological analysis. Sandmo knows of this difference and he makes a point of writing of cases in which the concept's meaning is used, but the term is not used. In his investigation of 'honour' he admits that some of the legal proceedings he is looking at are not classified as dealing with honour and the word is not used. Nevertheless, he chooses to count them as honour cases because honour is what lies underneath these cases and they would not have occurred in this format today.¹²¹ The cases are mainly about people suing one another for calling them by animal names. In our legal system this would be libel action, but in these seventeenth century cases calling of animal names suggested that the person was doing something illegal with animals, that is handling dead animals. Working with dead animals was not considered honourable for members of society and thus naming someone with animal names would be an attempt at social exclusion.

The possibility of a discipline of *History of Cultural Concepts*

All essential concepts make a foundation for society. For historians working with political concepts this was particularly clear, but it seems to be more disguised in cultural history of concepts. This is strange because cultural history seems to be clear that culture is a foundation for society that needs investigation, and with a linguistic epistemology the link between concepts and society is natural. It is clear that Foucault, Clark and Sandmo base their analysis on concepts being a foundation both for the creation and understanding of culture. The knowledge of 'Man' is an example of how a society perceives itself, but also how the structure of that society is. 'Witchcraft' seems to be in a different category because witchcraft does not immediately seem to be part of our understanding of the world. However, this is the importance that Clark points out; witchcraft and how a society looks upon witchcraft define this society. Witchcraft is part of a different belief-system.¹²² Just as the concept

¹²⁰ Foucault (2002 II), p.212

¹²¹ Sandmo (1999 I), pp.114-5

¹²² Evans, p.51

'Man' is very important in our society because self-identity is important in our culture, but did not exist before the nineteenth century, 'witchcraft' was an important concept in the period between the fifteenth and eighteenth century, but is marginalised in our society. The same is true for 'violence', which is a concept Sandmo does not find in much use in seventeenth century Norway, but that the phenomenon we would classify as 'violence' still exists. However, concepts like 'honour' and 'truth' are more important in this society and thus characterises the society to a greater extent. All these historians seem to believe that the concepts they have looked at are particularly important for a specific society. Although Foucault's work is mainly on the Enlightenment, 'Man' is in the foundation for modern society, 'witchcraft' is the foundation of society in Early Modern Europe, more so than the dogmas of the church according to Clark and 'honour' was the foundation of early seventeenth century Norway.

These historians came from different backgrounds before they started on their work in history of cultural concepts. Whilst Clark had worked with magic and witchcraft for some years and then in 1997 changed into a linguistic mode and wrote *Thinking with Demons* on the concept of 'witchcraft', Sandmo had always had methodology as his primary interest and had written articles inspired by both Foucault and Koselleck's history of concepts before his doctoral thesis turned into a book, *Voldssamfunnets undergang*, on the concept of 'violence'. *The Order of Things* was one of Foucault's earlier publications, and in addition he must be seen as an inspiration for the other two. He had just started his work on epistemes and concepts; his inspiration up until then had mainly been scientific and religious history. These historians do have in common a need for discourse analysis and a need for a hermeneutical approach. The concepts that have caught their interest have something to say about a society they are not part of; it is perhaps just because of the conceptual changes that has happened between these discourses and our society that clarifies these questions.

In conclusion it should be mentioned that these three historians are not the only ones who have undertaken conceptual inquiries into cultural concepts. An interesting study is the Norwegian essay collection *Bidrag til Verdiens*

*Historie*¹²³ – Contributions to a History of 'Values'. This was an answer to the Norwegian government's 'Commission of value' of 1998; it was supposed to discuss what important values were in the modern society and how to make people aware of this. Some historians were provoked by the fact that no historians were invited to this commission and Tor Egil Førland thus became the editor of this collection. Not all of the contributions can be seen as historical – the invitation to contribute was interdisciplinary – but most of them are different histories of the concept 'value' or other valuable concepts. It includes histories of 'values' in seventeenth century and 1930s Norway, in feminism and in national identity. In Britain, David Chaney's works on modern and postmodern culture can be seen as conceptual history. He investigates how a vocabulary of drama describes our collective experiences and thus enacts a social order in his book *Fictions of Collective Life* (1993).¹²⁴ He does not look into a special study of any concepts in particular, but he looks at how these words and concepts constitute a specific society, just as Foucault, Clark and Sandmo did.

¹²³ *Bidrag til Verdiernes Historie* [Contributions to a History of 'Values'] ed T. E. Førland (Oslo: Pax, 2000)

¹²⁴ Chaney, David; *Fictions of Collective Life. Public Drama in Late Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993)

4 Concepts, identity and gender

*The search for 'identity' (national, regional, sexual), and the definition of alterity, insiders and outsiders to a culture, have, in the view of some, changed history beyond recognition.*¹²⁵

The twentieth century has seen a conceptualisation of gender. Whilst the term 'gender' denoted a grammatical form, it became clear as feminism developed that the concept of the socially constructed sex also needed a term. 'Women' and 'homosexual' are two concepts that have not been dealt with in the traditional history of concepts, but they are concepts investigated in gender studies. As when it came to cultural concepts, gender historians have not categorised themselves as historians of concepts. This is of course because their main concern has not been concepts in general, but one or a few concepts in particular and it is not the whole of gender history, women's history or history of homosexuality that have taken a linguistic perspective. Gender history is usually much more linguistically aware than more traditional women's history. This chapter will use Joan W. Scott's definition from *Gender and the Politics of History*. Inspired by Foucault, she defines gender as 'knowledge about sexual difference.'¹²⁶ This is taken to mean the understanding produced by cultures and societies of human relationship that will never be true or absolute, but relative. Scott continues:

It is produced in complex ways within large epistemic frames that themselves have and (at least quasi-) autonomous history. Its uses and meanings become contested politically and are the means by which relationships of power – of dominion and subordination – are constructed. Knowledge refers not only to ideas but to institutions and structures, everyday practices as well as specialized rituals, all of which constitute social relationships. Knowledge is a way of ordering the world; as such it is not prior to social organization.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Hufton, Olwen; 'Women, Gender and the *Fin de Siècle*' in *Companion to Historiography* ed M. Bentley (London: Routledge, 1997), p.930

¹²⁶ Scott (1988), p.2

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

De Beauvoir's offspring

Gender is linguistically created by society; and this has been universally known since Simone de Beauvoir stated that a 'woman' is not born, but made – 'every female human being is not necessarily a woman; to be so considered she must share in that mysterious and threatened reality known as femininity.'¹²⁸ De Beauvoir's title, *The Second Sex*, declares that there is not equality in gender questions. The category of 'the Other' is central to the making of identity. Identification and identity are therefore closely linked to gender. Gender-divisions are not connected to biology, but are dependent on how languages identify and classify. In addition there is the more difficult – difficult for the historian who tries to grasp this objectively – aspect of experience and identity. Just as 'class-consciousness' was important for the analysis of 'class' sexual-consciousness has been very important for the concepts 'gay', 'lesbian' and 'queer' and it has been raised in the discussion of 'women'.

Michel Foucault continued in de Beauvoir's footsteps and continued the interest in 'the Other' in the definition of gender and sexuality. In addition he brings in a linguistic methodology of investigation. De Beauvoir's influence on the general public debate was great, so Foucault might not have felt that she directly influenced him. As de Beauvoir has been a strong source of inspiration for feminists, Foucault has become, unintentionally, an inspiration for homosexual activists. Theoretical developments in the last five decades have made constructivism important and Foucault and de Beauvoir have been used to support this view.

As 'gender studies' is a discipline that developed in the 1980s, its theory is to a large extent based on postmodern philosophy. There is a strong linguistic and conceptual awareness because of the importance of identity. The methodology of history of concepts is therefore compatible with gender history. The reason why history of concept has not been occupied with gender concepts, is because of the masculine perspective political concepts encourages. This is not surprising as, according to Bonnie G. Smith, the

¹²⁸ Beauvoir, Simone de; *The Second Sex* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953)[First French edition 1949], p.13

historical profession has, or at least had until the 1970s, a masculine perspective.¹²⁹ However, this should not be a handicap for histories of gender concepts. It must be agreed that the concepts 'men', 'women', 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual', are as essential in defining society as the political and social concepts which the *Begriffsgeschichte* historians have seen as the foundation of society. In the last chapter, it was pointed out that these historians had picked out concepts that were particularly defining for a society. Gender history is perhaps as much a contemporary manifestation of identity. These concepts are of great importance in our society. Nevertheless, gender history also looks at conceptual change and the roots of these concepts.

Women's history and Gender Studies

Gender became a historiographical category in the 1960s, first as a result of female emancipation movement but it developed into a discipline that questioned male and female roles.¹³⁰ It was, nevertheless, first in the 1980s that it became common to talk rather of 'gender history', than 'women's history', but the change of term created much debate.¹³¹ In contrast to women's history, gender history developed to include other questions of gender identities than 'woman'; for example 'gay', 'lesbian', 'homosexual' and 'queer'. The identity and emancipatory aspect of gender history relate this discipline to feminists and gay activists and becomes more political than women's history ever has been. The interest in gender history does not necessarily come from gender studies. Gender was also an important question amongst New Cultural History historians as they valued the emancipatory function of historiography.¹³² The sources of exploitation and domination were to be found in the many interpersonal relations in which human beings exert power over others.

Although women have not had a central position in previous centuries' historiography, they have been there in the background. Women's history, on the other hand, gives women the limelight on the historical stage. The concept of 'women's history' has probably gone through the same conceptualisation

¹²⁹ Smith, Bonnie G. *The Gender of History. Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998)

¹³⁰ Bentley, Michael; *Modern Historiography. An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.143-4

¹³¹ Hufton, p.932

¹³² Iggers, p.99

process as 'women'. Although the term has changed, women's history is still also examined in a more traditional way. Not all historians are interested in identity questions or linguistic change as gender questions presupposes. Women's history started out wanting to tell the history of women of the past, and it is still done that way. The discipline of women's history and gender history has developed along the same twist and turns as other historiographical disciplines. Women's history is, therefore, part of social history in the mid-twentieth century, and it is the linguistic and postmodernist changes that develop gender history.

Leonore Davidoff has an interesting linguistic history from a non-conceptual perspective in her essay collection *Worlds Between* on class and gender. Her main aim is to tell about the identity of women who worked in the nineteenth century England, especially in domestic service. Her identity approach gives her a conceptual analysis as well. The counterconcept of man/woman was used in an attempt to define the ambiguity of women, as were the ideas of beauty and ugliness, morality, sin and desire.¹³³ These ideas and the vocabulary along with it constructed both gender and class. Davidoff shows that identity and language was interwoven, but does not look upon concepts as a foundation for society. She is more interested in how ambiguous concepts or categories complicated identity.

Given the structure of gender categories and their centrality to the nineteenth-century concept of the family with its attendant male breadwinner, female housewife, non-working child roles, as well as the language of femininity and masculinity, it is not difficult to understand why women in public life posed such a threat to identity – for both men and women.¹³⁴

Through this comment, however, she demonstrates that these concepts were essential in the structure of nineteenth century family and society. Her analysis does not include a study of conceptual change. It is rather a discourse analysis of the 'women' in the nineteenth century. She has a critical attitude to how modern historians have looked upon the concept, but in addition how it was

¹³³ Davidoff, Leonore; *Worlds Between. Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p.6

¹³⁴ *ibid*, p.263

treated at the time. There has, she claims, been too much emphasis on biology and too little on language, both then and now.

Gender and the linguistic turn

Historians working with gender, class, ethnic minorities and other minority groups are more aware of conceptual ambiguity than most historians. These histories are necessarily linked to identity and perhaps they also are inevitably part of the linguistic turn. Identity is, in postmodern theory, not linked to belonging to natural categories and to taxonomic system, but to linguistic definition. Since interpretation and meaning are important parts of linguistic definitions they will always become more ambiguous and vague than for instance biological definition. Definition of sex is, in normal cases easy, but the definition of gender is more complex. The complexity of language makes an unambiguous definition difficult. To make this definition possible it is easy to turn to counter examples. Although a process of conceptualisation has been important within gender history, it should also be possible to write conceptual history of related concepts such as 'child', 'family', 'incest', and 'feminism', which usually are not conceptualised within gender studies. These concepts might be interesting for historians of cultural concepts.

Although conceptualisation was a phenomenon that started in the nineteenth century, concepts are of more importance in a linguistic epistemology. Koselleck preferred to talk of a conceptual turn rather than a linguistic turn, because he saw the conceptualisation process as continuing into our society and just beginning to become more important. Joan Scott sees the conceptualisation of gender concepts as a general trend of post-structuralism, where meaning is not fixed and tools that can handle ambiguity are useful.

Instead of attributing a transparent and shared meaning to cultural concept, post-structuralists insist that meanings are not fixed in a culture's lexicon, but are rather dynamic, always potentially in flux. Their study therefore calls for attention to the conflictual processes that establish meanings, to the ways in which such concepts as gender acquire the appearance of fixity, to the challenges posed for normative social definitions, and to the ways these challenges are met – in other words, to the play of force involved in any society's construction and implementation of meanings: to politics.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Scott (1988), p.5

Her comments are on gender, but could refer to all concepts and all identity questions. Working within post-linguistic turn historiography is a dynamic activity always in movement because of different interpretations. The movement is both between the historical identities and counterconcepts and with the historians' hermeneutic and linguistic experience. This must be seen as being part of the critical aspect of history of concepts.

Gender studies started out as a critical, aggressive discipline, but gender history today seems to have lost its aggression. Olwen Hufton is interested in knowing which attitudes young, female historians have to gender studies. It would be interesting to know if the change from 'women's history' to 'gender history' made for a change in attitude. The answer she got from female Oxford undergraduates in the late 1990s was this:

Women should have a history, but it should also reflect their relationships with other women as well as with men and the wider community. Women are clearly bearers of tradition, shapers of the next generation and so colluders in the construction of gender roles. Many have been victims, but not all were innocent.¹³⁶

This does not seem to be particularly critical or political. She does not comment much upon these results. Perhaps this attitude shows that the critical position for history of concepts in gender history is not present at the moment. When Riley earlier wrote that women had a "stronger case" with the category of 'women' than homosexuals had with 'homosexual', she might unconsciously have seen that the political debate is more active for 'gay rights' and 'gay identity' than women's issues and this has affected gender history too.

The roots of feminism do probably have the same roots as the conceptualisation of 'women'. It is interesting to note here that when John Stuart Mill discusses the roles of the sexes and thus uses 'women' in *The Subjection of Women*, 'women' does not occur as a concept.

That the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to the other – is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and

¹³⁶ Hufton, p.939

that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.¹³⁷

As this is a century before the linguistic turn, it is not surprising that Mill is not aware of the importance of concepts, but it is worth noting that the concept of 'human'; or 'Man' as Foucault investigated, seems to exist. Perhaps the conceptualisation of a political vocabulary of masculine interest was earlier than a conceptualisation of language including women and minorities.

Identity

The focus on identity in historiography is a recent interest. It is based on postmodern relativism and linguistic discourse. Identity is closely related to concepts because it is linguistically created, just as de Beauvoir stated for female identity. Identity is linguistically created, thus concepts are connected to concepts. Identity is connected to identifying categories. Categories are again connected to concepts because the way we have knowledge of categories resembles how we have knowledge of concepts. In the same way as concepts are defined by counterconcepts, categories will have parallel categories. The categories changes as opinion on what they should include changes. However, in contrast to concepts that are the basis for society, categories are creators of structure. Aletta Biersack writes about Marshall Sahlin's *Island of History* where 'structure' refers to 'cultural categories conceived, Saussure-like, as a conceptual grid: a system of differences, a set of categories. This grid encompasses social statuses (chief, commoner, woman, man), the names of divinities – in fact, the entire indigenous order in all its political, social and religious dimensions.'¹³⁸ The link to social status seems to be relevant in gender history where the concepts also refer to categories of social status.

On the question of identity, Scott is interested in its link to experience and therefore poses these questions:

How can we historicize "experience"? How can we write about identity without essentializing it? Answers to the second question ought to point toward answers to the first, since identity is tied to notions of experience,

¹³⁷ Mill, John Stuart; 'The Subjection of Women' in *On Liberty & The Subjection of Women* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1996) [First Published 1869], p.117

¹³⁸ Biersack, p.85

and since both identity and experience are categories usually taken for granted in ways that I am suggesting they ought not to be.¹³⁹

Her critical attitude, however, would seem unnecessary if a conceptual method had been used. Histories of concepts do not take identity and experience for granted and might therefore be excluded from her critique. Since history of concepts is based on discourse analysis, identity and experience will be something collective that will have a common understanding of the concept or at least some intersubjective understanding. She makes a point later in the article that experience is both something individual and something collective, but even the collective experience or memory would have been created by individual experiences. This is why she has problems in finding the essence in identity. Discourse analysis does not take away the individual, but looks rather at the collective than the individual. The essence in a concept – or identity – would lie in the language; the shared language and knowledge of the discourse.

Counterconcepts are close to Foucault's writing about 'the Other'. As counterconcepts is a couplet of concepts, usually where one is positive and the other negative, one strong and the other suppressed, which makes the meaning less ambiguous, 'the Other' will always be the concept representing the negative part. Both 'women' and 'homosexuals' have been classified as the opposition of what is normal; namely 'men' and 'heterosexuals'. Foucault saw the need to write the history of the suppressed. Those belonging to the category of 'the Other' have the experience of not *being normal* and this is often the background to the writing of these histories. However, histories of experience will always be difficult for the historian because of the subjectivist point of view. Scott claims that the experience excludes the possibility of a history of concepts.

[T]he project of making experience visible precludes critical examination of the workings of the ideological system itself, its categories of representation (homosexual/heterosexual, man/woman, black/white as fixed immutable identities), its premises about what these categories mean and how they operate, its notions of subjects, origin, and cause. The project of making

¹³⁹ Scott, Joan W.; "Experience" in *Feminists Theorize the Political* eds. J. Butler and J. W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.33

experience visible precludes analysis of the workings of this system and of its historicity; instead it reproduces its terms.¹⁴⁰

This is an important point, but we must not forget that the experience perhaps is the gateway to analysing a concept, and can thus be a way to essential concepts. However, as experience is based on individual and not shared accounts, as it would be in discourse, it does not have any interest in a conceptual analysis. As memory and experience history seems to be of interest in contemporary historiography, history of concepts and history of experience might become conflicting approaches within gender history.

Concepts of gender identity

In the vocabulary of gender history, the 'category of women' is spoken of more often than 'the concept of women' although the former is treated as a concept.¹⁴¹ It seems to be important for these historians that 'women' is an object that is classified and not an abstract idea. This is a contradiction when it really is the essence of the meaning of 'women' they are looking for and not the physical women. The methods they use seem, nevertheless, to take conceptual consideration into account. These theories appear to be able to handle the ambiguity that lingers in the word. Looking through history there have been different criteria used to classify the ideal-type 'woman', and this might be the reason for talking of gender as categories. I am not sure, however, if the category of 'women' will require the same analysis as the concept of 'women'. Foucault analyzed the concept of 'homosexuality' and John Boswell wrote on the concept 'gay'. These studies were based on the relationship between the concepts and self-identity. As Riley has pointed out, there has been criticism, stating that 'woman' has to be treated differently because neither identity nor self-identity is necessary for a classification of women. This must be criticism that takes physical characteristics in to account, not only gender divisions. It seems to me that 'women' is not only a category, but also a concept. If gender is created linguistically and contextually, it should at least be possible to treat it as a concept even though it might not be the proper

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.25

¹⁴¹ Denise Riley uses category of women on page 1, but concept 'women' p.47 in *'Am I That Name?' Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988)

linguistic term for it. There might have been a debate in gender theory on the problem of 'category' and 'concept', but it seems elusive.

Because the discussion of gender identities is based on categories and not concepts, it is possible to discern whether all of these categories are of the same kind. Denise Riley writes on the category of 'women' in relation to 'homosexual' based on biological differences:

Here some might retort that there are real, concrete women. That what Foucault did for the concept of 'the homosexual' as an invented classification just cannot be done for women, who indubitably existed long before the nineteenth century unfolded its tedious mania for fresh categorisations. That historical constructionism has run mad if it can believe otherwise. How can it be overlooked that women are a natural as well as a characterised category, and that their distinctive needs and sufferings are all too real? And how could a politics of women, feminism, exist in the company of such an apparent theoretician disdain for reality, which it has mistakenly conflated with ideology as if the two were one?¹⁴²

Just as much gender history is written for a political purpose, it is important for Riley to make a point of "the Otherness" and she seems to believe that will be best marked if women's questions are more important than homosexual history. If this had been a conceptual discussion, both concepts would have been linguistically constructed; a discussion based on which is the most real would be superfluous. Even though all sorts of gender identities are social constructions there seems to be a difference in the treatment of the concept 'women' from the concept 'gay'. One usually speaks of the category 'woman', not concept, and the concept 'gay'. This seems to imply that 'women' are a part of the taxonomy of the masculine and feminine sex, while 'gay' is a constructed identity. However, this might be just a matter of confusion of terms for all gender theory has in common that they feel like 'the Other'.

'Woman'

Historians looking into women's history do not necessarily look upon the vocabulary that is creating woman. They are more concerned with the cultural and economical reasons for women's position. Often studies of the concept of women will be indirect; a linguistic analysis will be in addition to

¹⁴² Riley, Denise; *'Am I That Name?' Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p.3

another argumentation. Denise Riley, however, has a good example of a history of the concept 'women' in *'Am I that Name?'* (1988). She starts off with stating her problem:

This 'women' is not only an inert and sensible collective; the dominion of fictions has a wider sway than that. The extent of its reign can be partly revealed by looking at the crystallisations of 'women' as a category. To put it schematically: 'women' is historically, discursively constructed, and always relative to other categories which themselves change; 'women' is a volatile collectivity in which female persons can be very differently positioned, so that the apparent continuity of the subject of 'women' isn't to be relied on; 'women' is both synchronically and diachronically erratic as a collectivity, while of the individual, 'being a woman' is also inconstant, and can't provide an ontological foundation.¹⁴³

Although Riley's analysis of 'women' is very similar to history of concept, is it doubtful that she has been inspired by this methodology. Nevertheless, the claim that 'women' is historically and discursively constructed is similar to the foundational role essential concepts have in other conceptual histories. There is the same contextual perception and awareness of synchronic and diachronic ambiguity. This interpretation also claims that 'woman' has no ontological foundation and this is a strong claim of relativity. This study is politically interested in women, but at the same time it is more interested in the language than the women themselves. This is most likely due to a real acceptance of the linguistic epistemology after the linguistic turn and its relativity. Riley's argument is based on conceptual change as showed in her argument that there was a conceptual change in the use of 'women' in the seventeenth century; 'rather that 'women' itself comes to carry an altered weight, and that a re-ordered idea of Nature has a different intimacy of association with 'woman' who is accordingly refashioned.'¹⁴⁴ This conceptual analysis is based on writing on women and feminism, and sees 'women' as a political concept that has been essential for our perception of society.

Joan Scott writes in *Gender and the Politics of History* that there are many aspects to women's history and one of them is attempts to conceptualise gender.¹⁴⁵ Denise Riley must be seen to belong to this tradition. It is perhaps

¹⁴³ *ibid*, pp.1-2

¹⁴⁴ *ibid*, p.14

¹⁴⁵ Scott (1988)

necessary to make the point clear here that history of gender concepts only is one part of gender history and will never be able to be the only approach to gender history. Scott mentions the works of Joan Kelly and Natalie Zemon Davis and their understanding of the need to see women's history including the making of gender and their significance, this being as important as other classifications as class and race.

This could be accomplished by examining social definitions of gender as they were expressed by men and women, constructed in and affected by economic and political institutions, expressive of a range of relationships that included not only sex but also class and power.¹⁴⁶

However, Scott has also later, in *History and Feminism*, another important remark about the classification of 'women' based on difference. She mentions that there has been controversy among feminist historians about whether or not this effort is even appropriate.

The controversy is symptomatic of the tensions within feminist history, between the political imperative to essentialize 'women' and the relativizing effects of history. Some historians have argued that attention to the construction of categories of difference distracts them from the activities of real women; others have suggested that 'relativism' undermines the possibilities for political action; still others maintain that differences (between women and men and among women) are self-evident facts that need only be reported and are unnecessarily complicated by abstract theoretical analysis.¹⁴⁷

This is an important point showing that women's history and feminist history might be conceptual, but does not have to be so. Scott does not mention names in this context, but it seems likely that only historians influenced by the linguistic turn would be interested in history of the concept 'women', while women's history in general can be attractive both from the academic perspective of broadening the historic discipline and from a political perspective of feminism. The difference between women's history and gender history might be important here, as women's history does not necessarily have

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.23

¹⁴⁷ Scott, Joan Wallach; 'Introduction' in *Feminism and History* ed. Joan Wallach Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.9

any linguistic interest. It is the identity question of gender history that makes conceptualisation interesting.

There is a problematic aspect of the study of 'women'. The concept 'women' refers to white middle-class women unless it has not been specifically designed to write the history of women of colour, working-class women, indigenous women or colonised women.¹⁴⁸ From the 1980s more histories on the variety of women's history have been written, but that means that the concept of women is even more ambiguous. It seems as if none has managed to write on the concept of 'women' from an inclusive perspective. It would be interesting to see if there are different conceptual changes in different historical contexts. Judith Butler sees an additional problem to how 'women' has been studied:

Within feminism, it seems as if there is some political necessity to speak as and for *women*, and I would not contest that necessity. [...] But this necessity needs to be reconciled with another. The minute that the category of women is invoked as *describing* the constituency for which feminism speaks, an internal debate invariable begins over what the descriptive content of that term will be.¹⁴⁹

Feminism and history of concepts seem incompatible because the identity between the subject and the audience limits a critical analysis. A conceptual analysis should not create identity, but show a concept, and its identity, has changed through history.

'Homosexual', 'gay'

The History of Sexuality is often taken and the classic study of the concept 'homosexual' despite the fact that this book hardly mentions the term. Foucault, nevertheless, looks at the conceptual change of 'sexuality', especially connected to the entirely different discourses of *ars erotica* and *scientia sexualis*.¹⁵⁰ The concept of 'homosexual' is made clear through the suppression techniques of *scientia sexualis*, which also creates the concept. Foucault's argument is that it

¹⁴⁸ Spongberg, Mary; *Writing Women's History Since the Renaissance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p.231

¹⁴⁹ Butler, Judith; 'Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernism"' in *Feminists Theorize the Political* eds. J. Butler and J. W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), p.15

¹⁵⁰ Foucault, Michel; *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984) [First French edition 1976], p.70

is the linguistic discourses and the power of the Church that have a joint responsibility for the development of the Western concepts on sexuality. There must be a reciprocal interaction between how the language has created this society and how society, with the Church as its principal actor, influenced the language to create the power needed to control the masses. Compared to Foucault's study of 'Man', where the conceptualisation of the term defines the modern society, this study sees the conceptual changes of 'sexuality' to define always the discourse and society it is used in. However, the conceptualisation of 'homosexual' in the nineteenth century is representative of what Foucault in general calls the Victorian regime.¹⁵¹ For Foucault these concepts are his main focus of research, but there are others who only find it necessary to look at a concept for definition before approaching other tasks in the historical work.

Gender historians could find out about gender relations through a conceptual study just as Foucault analysed power relations through concepts. Foucault's works have been of great inspiration to gender theorists, and it might be through him that conceptual analysis became a part of gender history. Denise Riley emphasises the importance of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. When it came out in 1976 it did not only 'characterize the nineteenth-century construction of "homosexuality"' but also, in placing "sex" in the modern sense as an aspect of the history of the present, it opened the way to the historicizing of any category, including that of "women".¹⁵² Foucault made the importance of language very clear, especially in the process of constructing concepts. Historians of concepts usually stress the importance of the nineteenth century as a period of conceptualisation. Foucault made this clear about the concept of 'homosexuality', but this made it also possible to look at the conceptualisation of 'women' at the same time.

John Boswell was interested in the concept 'gay', both in contrast to the term 'homosexual' and historically how this concept has been without a term. In his early book *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (1980) he

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 3-13

¹⁵² Riley, Denise; 'A Short History with Some Preoccupations' in *Feminists Theorize the Political* eds. J. Butler and J. W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 123

spends a chapter defining 'gay' as his area of research.¹⁵³ He suggests the concept 'gay' to be defined by self-identity in comparison with homosexuality, which usually is linked to homosexual practice. Boswell can then continue his research on the concept of this self-identity. The concept of 'gay' is further investigated in his book on homosexual marriages in pre-modern Europe, *The Marriage of Likeness*, where he is aware of the difficulty of translating this concept both over language and time barriers.¹⁵⁴ This concept must therefore be defined by a use of vocabulary and an understanding of cultures of same-sex friendships of that period. There were critiques of Boswell's works; not on the fact that he was attempting history of the concept 'gay', but of his methodological capabilities. David F. Greenberg goes through the debates that have been going on over the two terms *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* whether they do mean homosexual or not. He criticises Boswell for always having other interpretations without really having good arguments.¹⁵⁵ This is in his reference to his book on early Christian attitudes to homosexuals. An even more thoroughly criticism comes from Lutz Kaelber in a review of *The Marriage of Likeness*:

Does Boswell convincingly demonstrate the truth of his main argument? The answer to this question depends heavily on whether the author is correct in rendering a key term in the major Greek manuscripts as ritual solemnizing a marriage-type union between men: *adelphoiesis*, meaning, literally, "the making of a brother." Here, in fact, historical and philological specialists have already raised strong doubts about the lexicographical adequacy of Boswell's modern circumlocution. In the reading of the texts, the term denotes the ecclesiastical sanctification of spiritual brotherhood between men, without further romantic or sexual implications.¹⁵⁶

Kaelber is critical of Boswell's results and the quality of his research, but he does not seem to criticise the attempts at writing conceptual history. If it is so that the meaning of *adelphoiesis* does not correspond to the meaning of 'gay marriage', then Boswell's conceptual study must be considered bad research,

¹⁵³ Boswell, John; *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.43

¹⁵⁴ Boswell, John, *The Marriage of Likeness. Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe* (London: Fontana, 1995) [first published in the US in 1994 as *Same-Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe*], p.3

¹⁵⁵ Greenberg, David F.; *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp.212-3

¹⁵⁶ Kaelber, Lutz; Review of John Boswell's *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* in *Contemporary Sociology* 24:3 (1995), pp.367-8

but it is nevertheless research on the principles of history of concepts. Histories on 'homosexuality' are critical, just as gender history of 'women'. It is not surprising that Boswell can be seen as a critical historian, perhaps a characteristic of linguistic historians. Alan Bray, in an obituary of John Boswell in *History Workshop Journal*, takes a more favourable attitude towards Boswell's research and writes: 'To have been there in those years when [*Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*] appeared was to learn a lesson about the still open possibilities of history not easily forgotten.'¹⁵⁷ However, history of concepts should not be satisfied with being critical; conceptual awareness needs accuracy as well.

The fate of gender history

'Gender' is itself a concept that should be investigated. It is necessary to be sensitive to historical relativism when it comes to gender questions. Both the vocabulary and ideas of gender are new and a conceptual investigation will therefore mainly follow phenomena, vocabulary and meaning in different paths until they unite into our concepts in the twentieth century. Sandmo writes about Karine Jensdatter who in 1789 was allowed by the King to change her name to Casper Jensen because she was really a man and wanted to marry the girl he had made pregnant. Sandmo questions why Karine's sex had not been questioned earlier. Some rumours existed but no one seemed to care; she lived and worked like a woman hence she was a woman. Sandmo finds to other examples in history from France about women turning into men. These are earlier examples and he show how Aristotelian and Galenian anatomy described women as unfulfilled men, and thus made a change from woman to man seem possible. Gender is not an issue; this is a simple sex understanding of biology. Only with the microscope and the possibility of looking at cells did the difference between man and women became known.¹⁵⁸

Although Riley and Foucault seem to be exceptions in their methodical studies of gender concept, this does not mean that there have not been

¹⁵⁷ Bray, Alan; 'John Boswell' in *History Workshop Journal* 40 (1995), p.273 (whole obituary pp.273-4)

¹⁵⁸ Sandmo, Erling; *Mordernes forventninger. Kriminalitetshistoriske essay*. [The murder's expectations. Essays in the history of crime] (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1998), pp.62-101

attempts. Gender history has developed a linguistic awareness that make Rosalind Miles' *The Women's History of the World* (1988) look old-fashioned with her lack of linguistic analysis.¹⁵⁹ The conceptualisation of gender concepts seems to follow the same pattern as political and cultural concepts in being part of the conceptualisation process of modernity. Gender concepts might have had a still stronger conceptual change in the twentieth century. 'Gender' itself has gone through a conceptualisation process in the twentieth century and this might be a reason why historians have not yet been interested in the conceptual investigation. As it was remarked in the section of 'women', there might be a variety of gender concepts that has not yet been looked at or at least not through a conceptual analysis; 'black women', 'working women', 'lesbian', 'queer'. Histories of concept are traditionally undertaken within a country or one linguistic sphere to keep the discourse aspect of the inquiry, but as in other history of concepts a comparison between conceptualisation processes would be beneficial. It might also be of interest to compare to the conceptualisation process of other concepts; 'class', 'coloured', 'feminism', 'industry', 'children' 'identity'. 'Women', 'class' and 'working women' seem a natural group. Gender history has the advantage of being created after the linguistic turn and thus being open for conceptual analysis.

¹⁵⁹ Miles, Rosalind; *The Women's History of the World* (London: Michael Joseph, 1988)

Part III**Koselleck and Foucault:****Histories of concepts with a purpose**

5 History of Concepts as a way to understanding modernity: Reinhart Koselleck

*Past facts and contemporary judgement are, within the practice of investigation, the terminological poles which correspond to objectivity and partiality in epistemology.*¹⁶⁰

Reinhart Koselleck has become well known in the historical discourse for his original contribution to the understanding of historical temporality. His investigations spring out of his historical work on the development of political society alongside modernity. Koselleck's work can be seen to develop in three stages even though modernity and historical temporality always are essential. First is his involvement in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* which were much influenced by the other editors and thus in the traditional German tradition of historicism. Secondly, he develops history of concepts to be more discursive and thus more linguistic. The foundation for his investigation is still modernity. Thirdly, he develops his own vocabulary of concepts including 'space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation' which again makes his ideas on historical temporality possible. As this thesis is interested in historical thought after the linguistic turn, the two later phases are in focus here.

His work is identified with the focus on *Sattelzeit*, the period between 1750 and 1850 which Koselleck claims as being the period where society, especially, political society, went from a pre-modern state to modernity. His most notable concepts are 'space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation'. This chapter will concern itself with how Koselleck investigates modernity through essential concepts and historical temporality, and intends to argue that Koselleck's historical and philosophical aspects are closely linked. His understanding of time and temporality is a prerequisite for his writing about modernity. At the same time, historical temporality is something he has found

¹⁶⁰ Koselleck, Reinhart; *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time* Transl. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1985) p.152

from his historical research. Koselleck is occupied with modernity because he claims there was a shift in the political and social vocabulary and terminology from about 1750 and this 'Neuzeit' was a 'neue Zeit' - a new time or a new era.¹⁶¹ The change was from a pre-modern to a modern society. This change is therefore the foundation of our society and culture. By studying this history will we gain a better understanding of our own time. Koselleck can be seen to have two different projects through his career. The first is to understand contemporary society through a conceptual analysis of past societies, especially the period we call modernity. The second project is to understand temporality and the experience of time through conceptual analysis. Although these are two entirely different projects, they share the method and the common belief in concepts as a foundation for explanation.

The essence of modernity

Modernity is an essential historical concept that is best described through its relation to other essential concepts. Koselleck claims that 'progress' is the most striking concept defining modernity; especially since he believes progress is still important for the way we look on time and temporality. This view depends on our society continuing to have modernist values, not post-modern, late modern or any other relativistic view. The concept 'progress' is, according to Koselleck, 'the first historical concept which reduced the temporal difference between experience and expectation to a single concept.'

¹⁶² Progress is the relationship between the past and the future, but it is a strict power relationship which gives the future more value than the past, and thus favours expectation over experience. Progress combines experiences and expectations as both are endowed with a temporal coefficient of change. There are many concepts that are interlinked for Koselleck, but 'progress' is a concept that seems to be important whatever he writes about. This is because progress is the key word for modern society. When it comes to understanding history, 'progress' is the characteristic change that happened after the

¹⁶¹ Koselleck, Reinhart, 'Einleitung' in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* vol.1, eds. O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972), p.xv

¹⁶² Koselleck (1985), p.282

eighteenth century; or rather it was the social and economic progress that altered the views on change. Change is a concept that modifies its meaning through conceptualisation as it is linked to modernisation and progress. Modern history cannot be written without understanding change, just as progress and pre-modern history cannot be understood unless one is aware of one's own notion of progress and of the fact that it did not exist before the eighteenth century. The change of concepts in the past affects how easily we can understand the past. When we become aware of anachronisms we cannot ignore them, and misunderstood concepts are clearly anachronistic.

Koselleck still believes in a modern – nineteenth-century – understanding of history. 'History' being a modern concept it is also linked to a new understanding of the past. Koselleck does not seem to have made his own definition of the past and what history is, but he often uses the phrase 'the modern understanding of history' and he gives the impression of including both himself and nineteenth-century historians in this. What we then have to look at is what he means by the modern understanding of the past. It is clear that he contrasts this with both cyclical historiography, a Christian coming of Christ and even the secular *Historia magistra vitae*; that history is society's moral teacher. The modern understanding of history is based upon looking at the past for its own sake, not as a guide. This can be seen as a 're-presentation' of the past.¹⁶³ The study of the past reads the narration of the past in a reflective way, but in a way that has no moral purpose. Koselleck seems to be very faithful to the historicist understanding of history. It is a focus on the singularity of events, which is the theoretical premise of both historicism and of the doctrine of progress. The singularity of events knows no intractability and hence permits no direct instruction. 'History' and a historical understanding are thus an elemental features of modernity.

It is the political development that creates modernity and Koselleck's essential concepts are all connected to political formation; states and societies in particular. Pim den Boer emphasise Koselleck's investigation of 'Staat' [State] in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* as a good example of Koselleck's

¹⁶³ *ibid*, p.142

significance on the dynamics of modernity.¹⁶⁴ The state in the *Sattelzeit* was seen as the driving force of progress. In addition, the concept carried an ambiguity of what society was; there were contradictory views of society. Both states and 'state' were created at this time. Modernity's dynamics can best be summed up by dynamic concepts; 'politicisation', 'democratisation', the development of 'ideologies' and the change of temporality. The interest in the political development in modernity can be seen already in *Critique and Crisis* which is a study of the emergence of modern state and society. Politicisation and democratisation shape the concept of the new state. This happens within the linguistic developing process of ideologies with the new temporality as context.

The conceptual turn and the linguistic foundation of society

'All language is historically conditioned, and all history is linguistically conditioned.'¹⁶⁵ This quote is taken from an article by Koselleck in 1989 and sums up the essence of his philosophical foundation for historical writing. Language is a foundation for history, philosophy and politics, but for Koselleck language is also the basis of society and societal structures. Post-linguistic turn historiography has joined the Kantian concepts of time and space with language as the three keystones of history. Koselleck should, because of this, be considered a linguistic historian, but he has objections to a postmodern, linguistic terminology. Instead he considers himself to be part of the 'conceptual turn' that started in the eighteenth century. Concepts function in a discursive structure so even though Koselleck is in strong opposition to structuralism, his conceptual history seems to be related to argumentation and discourse history.¹⁶⁶ Discourse analysis is connected to linguistic structuralism and not traditional historical structuralism.

A criterion of modernity are the concepts of movement that develop in this period as indices of social and political change and also as linguistic factors

¹⁶⁴ den Boer, Pim; 'The Historiography of German *Begriffsgeschichte* and the Dutch Project of Conceptual History' in Hampsher-Monk, Tilmans and van Vree (eds.) *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), p.15

¹⁶⁵ Koselleck, Reinhart; 'Linguistic Change and the History of Events' in *The Journal of Modern History* vol.61 (1989), p.649

¹⁶⁶ This is argued among other by Jordheim, p.170

in the formation of consciousness, ideological criticism, and the control and management of behaviour.¹⁶⁷

[C]oncepts have an internal temporal structure that differs from that of the events that they help to bring about and that they are supposed to comprehend. This result is also true of our modern concepts of movement that, since the eighteenth century, have attuned our entire linguistic inventory to the idea of the necessity of change, to alteration, and to intentional transformation. The central concepts are improvement, development, progress, history itself, reform, crisis, evolution, and even revolution. Now it is precisely these concepts that, purely semantically, exercise a particularly stabilizing effect.¹⁶⁸

In modernity, or *Neuzeit*, vocabulary starts to change and therefore its concepts are no longer fixed ideas. As they change they are part of changing mentalities and society. Modernity is for Koselleck thus connected to the rise of ideologies and a different society. This can be dated from the late eighteenth century. This process of conceptualisation has continued and we can still say we live in a conceptual age. In *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, Koselleck remarks that earlier historiography written by Ranke has stated that Prussia was a country that slowly grew to power, but Koselleck would rather argue that it was the changes into modernity that changed Prussia.¹⁶⁹ This shows that Koselleck had an early interest in modernity.

Concepts can be seen as a collection of linguistic features that are tools that we can use to grasp the experience of time. Changes in concepts give us an indication of experience, as changes are more radical experiences than a stationary life. Concepts also carry meaning, which as a human construct also tells about the mentality. Conceptual history tries to make the experiences of time visible for the historian. These experiences of time are bound to our political and social essential concepts.

One example of how strong Koselleck believes concepts to be is his *Critique and Crisis*.¹⁷⁰ When Koselleck wrote this as a dissertation in the 1950s and when it was published in Germany in the 1960s, it was assumed to be an

¹⁶⁷ Koselleck (1985), p.266

¹⁶⁸ Koselleck (1989), p.659

¹⁶⁹ Koselleck, Reinhart; *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution. Allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1967), p.13

¹⁷⁰ *Critique and Crisis* was first published in Germany as *Kritik und Krise: eine Studie zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt* in 1959

allusion to the Cold War. However, when the English edition came in 1988, Koselleck explains his real reasons:

This study is a product of the early postwar period. It represented an attempt to examine the historical preconditions of German National Socialism, whose loss of reality and Utopian self-exaltation had resulted in hitherto unprecedented crimes. There was also the context of the cold war. Here, too, I was trying to enquire into its Utopian roots which, it seemed, prevented the two superpowers from simply recognizing each other as opponents. Instead they blocked one another and thereby destroyed the opportunity for a peace which each superpower self-confidently proclaimed to be capable of establishing single-handedly. It was in the Enlightenment, to which both liberal-democratic America and socialist Russia tightly retraced themselves, that I began to look for the common roots of their claim to exclusiveness with its moral and philosophical legitimations.¹⁷¹

Koselleck believes that the reasons for National Socialism in Germany can be found in the conceptualisation process; that this process was so strong that it made political history. It is a tension between society and language that is the force behind all history. 'Social relations, conflicts, their solutions, and their changing presuppositions are never congruent with the linguistic articulation by which societies act, comprehend, interpret, change, and reform themselves.'¹⁷² Modern society was created by conceptualisation, but so was also National Socialism, Socialism and Liberalism and thus also conflicts on the expectations of the future.

Views of history and time are closely interlinked, but few historians take the time and effort to be interested in the philosophy of time. Koselleck found that the experience of time is not a constant, but has gone through the same conceptualisation as other concepts. He combines history and time to an investigation of the past and present. *Futures Past* is a book devoted to this sort of relationship, and Koselleck writes

If the whole of history is now unique, then to be consistent, the past must be distinct from the present and the present from the future. In brief, the historicizing of history and its progressive exposition were at first to sides of the same coin. History and Progress shared a common factor in the experience of a genuinely historical temporality.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Koselleck, Reinhart; *Critique and Crisis* (Oxford: Berg, 1988), p.1

¹⁷² Koselleck (2002), p.24

¹⁷³ Koselleck (1985), p.143

Koselleck brings into historiography a new focus on the conceptualisation of time. Pocock has also written about the conceptualisation of time and what impact this has on historical understanding.¹⁷⁴ It was not a new thought that history was invented in what we call modernity. What is new with Koselleck's view is that there was a new kind of historical experience, or temporal experience that forced the development of the past. Modernity has a new temporal understanding where the past and the future acquire new meanings and thus also new uses. It is unclear what Koselleck means by experience – but this might be the natural ambiguity of a concept – and this is a pity because this is the new thing he brings into temporal understanding. It is when the experience of time changes that history as an academic discipline come into being. The change is according to Koselleck, the new belief in progress.

'History' as an effect of modernity

Historiography developed in the nineteenth century due to conceptual changes. Foucault and Koselleck agree that 'history' was created in the nineteenth century together with historical understanding and academic historiography.¹⁷⁵ Historical writing was as old as Thucydides, but historical consciousness was created within the modern episteme. This influences how they both write historiography. None of them would like to be under the same constraints as those writing within the canon of traditional historical method. Instead they want a liberating science about the past; a discipline that can uncover structures created within society. Historiography is for Koselleck a result of conceptual changes. The vocabulary in the eighteenth century must have changed quite radically, but still slower than the political changes. Koselleck does not question if it was possible for people to keep up with the language; if there became a division between people with a modern conceptualised vocabulary and people that had not heard these new ideas. Would people be aware that the words they used as a child had changed meaning in their adult years? Thomas Kuhn claims that a generation of

¹⁷⁴ Pocock, p.39

¹⁷⁵ Foucault (2002 I), p.401

scientist have to die before a new paradigm can exist.¹⁷⁶ Perhaps this is the case for Koselleck's changes too; that the conceptualisation was something that changed with generations. Nevertheless, some changes happen quite rapidly. With the French Revolution, many political concepts did develop quickly. It is rather a question of how fast the old concepts needed to vanish. When the meaning of a concept no longer is in current use, one might assume they would die. Koselleck's source material loosely seems to be political documents. He might have found a different speed of change if more varied sources had been investigated.

'History' is something that also goes through a conceptualisation in the nineteenth century. It is only with the modern understanding of history that historical science becomes aware of its temporal location and then becomes the study of the past.¹⁷⁷ Koselleck shows an interest in the conceptualisation of 'history' in German as the German language has two words, *Geschichte* and *Historie*, which had until the modern era been used interchangeably. The history of this concept is interesting because it changes meaning and can also be seen as adapting its changing mental context, such as in the comprehension of experience:

The epistemological ambiguity of Kant's concept of experience, embracing both reality and its knowledge, finds a surprising analogy in the new concept "history" (*Geschichte*), as it emerged at the same time. Since around 1780 the concept "history", hitherto only referring to events, has absorbed the corresponding concepts of *historia*.¹⁷⁸

History was thus a child of modernity and the combination of history and concepts might possibly be as old as the eighteenth century even though the discipline of *Begriffsgeschichte* is newer.

As mentioned above historical consciousness developed with the French Revolution. The traditional view has been that the historical consciousness of the nineteenth century was a consequence of the French Revolution. At the same time there is a growing belief in individuality which

¹⁷⁶ Kuhn, Thomas S.; *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996 [First edition 1966])

¹⁷⁷ Koselleck (1985), p.142

¹⁷⁸ Koselleck (2002), p.47

perhaps has roots in the Enlightenment. German history can to a large extent be seen as something that the Germans became aware of as a means to find their own identity. Germany had lost to Napoleon and then managed to throw him off; thus the Germans needed to look at German history to find their roots. A long term reason for a historical consciousness lay in interest in language. It started with the interest in grammar, but then developed to include etymology and seeing how languages had grown. The development of languages proved that there had been progress, not a circular view of history. The new discipline of history differentiated between stories, legend, the past and history. 'Experience is present past, whose events have be incorporated and can be remembered.'¹⁷⁹ History was the knowledge of an alien experience.

Begriffsgeschichte is dependent on a modern conceptual society – a society with a conceptual understanding, if not linguistic epistemology – and can therefore only be written about the last 300 years. This is because conceptual history is founded on the belief that language and discourse are factors that characteristically define a society. This is essential within linguistic epistemology. Concepts are indicators of change in language and thus also of change in society. The limitation of this knowledge is that this analysis only works on societies that have conceptual understanding. For Koselleck it is important to treat the historical object on its own terms and it is therefore difficult for him to look at pre-modern historiography because of its lack in historical understanding. Written sources from the pre-modern era cannot be adapted for historical understanding and facts will thus not be of the same importance to us. We prefer to write historiography on our own premises. Perhaps it is Koselleck's interest in temporality that has made him write history from the Enlightenment onwards only because he would like to converse with people that understand temporality in the same way as himself.

History is becoming depoliticised, perhaps due to what is considered post-modern attitude, and Koselleck wants to claim history back into the political sphere. Victor Gourevitch writes in the foreword to *Critique and Crisis*, that the reason why Koselleck takes such an active political view is because he views 'the modern understanding of politics, and hence modern political

¹⁷⁹ Koselleck (1985), p.272

practice, [as having] become dangerously depoliticised'.¹⁸⁰ Koselleck thus uses historiography for a pragmatic purpose. Kari Palonen continues this line of thought and argues that conceptual history can be an alternative style of political theorising. 'Conceptual history offers a chance to turn the contestability, contingency and historicity of the use of concepts into special instruments for conceptualizing politics.'¹⁸¹ Using historiography for a pragmatic purpose gives connotation to the pre-modern moral historiography, but Koselleck's and Palonen's writings imply a modern understanding of temporality which of course distinguishes them from Enlightenment historical moralists. Instead, they are representative of the modern – and post-modern – academic pursuit of liberation through discovering truth behind the structures. Conceptual historiography can thus be normative without having to give up its academic pretension.

Historical time: past vs. future

With the modern age for the first time, an epistemological division between the entities of past and future emerged. Subsequently, the past has been considered slow and outdated and the future has hope, speed and progress. Experience for Koselleck is strictly connected to the relationship between past and future, and linked to the phenomenon of expectation for the future. Experience is of historical time, and is thus connected to temporality, but experience is something that only can be found through empirical research. However, historical experience is therefore not the same as historical facts. Koselleck writes:

[E]xperience and expectation are two categories appropriate for the treatment of historical time because of the way that they embody past and future. The categories are also suitable for detecting historical time in the domain of empirical research since, when substantially augmented, they provide guidance to concrete agencies in the course of social and political movement.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Gourevitch, Victor; 'Foreword' in Koselleck, Reinhart; *Critique and Crisis* (Oxford: Berg, 1988), p.vii

¹⁸¹ Palonen, Kari; 'The History of Concepts as a Style of Political Theorizing: Quentin Skinner's and Reinhart Koselleck's Subversion of Normative Political Theory' in *European Journal of Political Theory* 1 (2002), p.92

¹⁸² Koselleck (1985), pp.270-1

It seems as if he believes it is possible to use experience and expectation to understand the course of social and political movement. Perhaps many different experiences will be enough to create a full context. The differentiation of historical from nonhistorical, ahistorical, or antihistorical, is a feature of modernity. Before this epoch, there existed ideas about 'history' as inquiry, the past, temporality, remembrance and as a rhetorical genre. Koselleck believes historical temporality is a unique kind of temporality. Temporal extensions can always be described as experience (about the past) or expectation (about the future). Before modernity, experience and expectation were seen as symmetrical. However, with historicity in the modern society, expectation has become more important. There is a feeling that progress has accelerated. The past, i.e. history, becomes something different from the present and thus historical temporality becomes something different from present temporality.

Koselleck sees historical temporality as something unique, and his views can be seen in contrast to other historians. Two interesting opposites are Foucault who would prefer historiography without temporality and Braudel who wrote about the plurality of times. The essence is, all the same, that good historians need to reflect on time. The relationship between history and time developed with historiography as a modern discipline. Iggers supports this view of the development in historiography as he comments upon temporality in Koselleck, Foucault and Braudel.

The historians we have discussed have largely abandoned the idea of a linear, directional history, characteristic of much of historical thought since the period Reinhart Koselleck has described as the transition between about 1750 and 1850 from the premodern to the modern time. Michel Foucault considers the idea of *one* history to be an invention of modern times, which have already ended. Most *Annales* historians would concur. In the place of one historical time, they see a plurality of coexisting times, not only among different civilizations but also within each civilization.¹⁸³

Koselleck's project on time depends on his interest of modernity. He does not develop any temporal philosophy independent of his historical observations of modernity. Koselleck's theories are therefore valuable for historians working with modernity, but they do not challenge any philosophical theories of time. This can be seen as a disadvantage of his theory; it does not try for a universal

¹⁸³ Iggers, p.56

effort. Both as a historian and a philosopher, Koselleck can best be understood in a modernist paradigm.

Foucault thought that he was writing purer history when temporal causation is removed, that he is able to show how things were experienced at the time. Foucault's understanding of time and temporality is connected to his understanding of the past. Compared with Koselleck, Foucault does not make any important issue of the difference between time and temporality. Just as the past is something that exists objectively, time is something that can only be understood through human perception of temporality, and can only be grasped through human interpretation. When Foucault speaks about the freezing of time in his earlier works, he does not really talk about time itself. He merely states that he wants to make a synchronic analysis of a discourse or episteme. Temporality is of no importance in archaeology, or rather it is important that time is taken away from history to make archaeology. Later temporality makes the change from one discourse to another. Koselleck is interested in how people experience temporality; this is of little interest for Foucault. He is more interested in how people experience their context at a fixed time, than in the development of it. Foucault took temporality out of history when he decided to see history as constructed by his epistemes. Foucault points out that there are no links between the epistemes whatsoever, so there is no such thing as historical development or a timeline. Epistemes supply sole continuity in the chaos of discontinuity.

Fernand Braudel talks about *times*; that things move at different speed and thus it is necessary to write the histories of all these levels. This is well described in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II*.¹⁸⁴ However, just as Foucault 'treat[s] 'history only to freeze it',¹⁸⁵ Braudel also takes a close up view of just one period in time. Nevertheless, Braudel sees the necessity of seeing history as movement and development and thus manifests an interest in causation and temporality. Except for the lack of time, Foucault gives the impression that he has same interests as Braudel, but that he would like to carry out his research on a purely synchronic level. Since developments

¹⁸⁴ Braudel, Fernand; *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* (London: Collins 1972)

¹⁸⁵ Foucault (2002 II) p.183

for Braudel happen with unequal speed and for Foucault spontaneously without continuity, the only possible way to capture the spirit of some movement or historical phenomenon is to freeze time.

Historiography has tried to create systems of temporality that suit our experience of the past, which sometimes changes. Koselleck describes this in his idea of the contemporaneous of the non-contemporary. This view believes in many different histories, not one History. The different histories have different tempos and rhythm. Time is a unique experience. In the understanding of history and temporality there are two major differences; events that can be narrated, and structures that can be described. We find once contemporary sources reliable – the accounts of eyewitnesses – and structures explanatory. Only events can take place in a temporal sequence. Structures take place in temporal relations, but not in a strict sequence.

Concepts not only teach us of the singularity (for us) of past meanings, but also contain structural potential, dealing with the contemporaneous in the noncontemporary, which cannot be reduced to the pure temporal succession of history.¹⁸⁶

The contemporaneous of the non-contemporaneous is the relationship between events and structures. Events are once contemporary experience, while structures only are descriptions which never can be experienced or retold in narratives. There is a reciprocal relationship between events and structures where events only can be understood by structure and vice versa. 'The transposition of once-direct experience into historical knowledge – even if it is an unexpected meaning released as the fragmentation of a past horizon of expectation gains recognition – is dependent upon a chronologically measurable sequence.'¹⁸⁷ To narrate events or describe structures is it necessary to use historical concepts to make the past conceivable. Koselleck writes about temporal understanding as being constituted by experience and expectation. This makes historical understanding part of the individual.

That 'progress', 'citizen', 'nation' or 'freedom' were ambiguous concepts, was something new, and thus what made 'Modernity' modern. Since

¹⁸⁶ Koselleck (1985), p.113

¹⁸⁷ *ibid*, p.106

concepts move through history at a different pace to ideas – faster, radical changes – modernity appears when experience and expectation part.¹⁸⁸ Earlier it was believed that expectation could be guided by experience. History was just the same experiences again and again. However, with modernity came the belief in progress and the possibility to expect changes. Expectation became linked to hope, something that had not been possible in a circular perception of history. Even the Christian salvation history had been based on a hope of something after life, not within history. Past experience changed value, and historiography changed, because it could no longer say anything about what to expect of the future. Concepts are what now make history conceivable as it is impossible to narrate an event, represent a structure or describe a process without the use of historical concepts. The history of the concept must be made explicit, so that the historian and the reader can compare the past with the present. However, it seems that Koselleck is interested only in concepts that have survived in some form today. *Begriffsgeschichte* can work only as a method with concepts within the modern age. A concept like 'democracy' is only a concept in modern times when it has its ambiguous meaning, while the word 'democracy' in ancient Greece had a fixed meaning to which democracy could be compared. However, it can be questioned if today's 'democracy' has enough in common with the concept of 'democracy' that developed in the eighteenth century to make this exercise worthwhile. In contrast to Gadamer's hermeneutic chain of tradition that makes interpretation possible, Koselleck seem to have a more direct approach to past concepts.

'Space of Experience' and 'Horizon of Expectation' are two important concepts in Koselleck's philosophy of history. Together they are what constitute the new temporal experience of modernity. 'Experience' and 'expectation' claim the highest degree of generality, but they also claim an indispensable application which makes them resemble the historical categories of time and space. 'Space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation' can be seen as meta-historical categories. Experience 'is present past, whose events have been incorporated and be remembered' and expectation 'is the future made present: it directs itself to the not-yet, to the non-experienced, to that

¹⁸⁸ *ibid*, p.276

which is to be revealed.¹⁸⁹ The horizon is the line behind which a new space of experience will open, but which cannot yet be seen. For Koselleck it is important to point out that before modernity, experience and expectation were quite similar, but with the progress in modernity, a historical change took place and hopes of accelerated progress were made for the future. As historians we thus have a different understanding of the past, than what we have of the present or future.

Koselleck in between past and future historiography

Koselleck does not believe in postmodernism. Modernity and the modern age are thus defined by the conceptualisation process. Then how does that place our age? Jordheim writes that it is easy to argue that we now have left the modern era and entered the post-modern era because we do not have a general belief in progress any more and progress was just this defining concept of modernity.¹⁹⁰ He continues, however, to explain that Koselleck still rejects the use of 'postmodern'. Koselleck has semantic reasons for this as the concept 'modern' does have the function of always describing what has happened most recently, in contrast to what has happened earlier. Hence, the concept 'modern' will always include the eradication of itself. 'Postmodern' will for Koselleck thus be a tautology, and the concept of 'postmodernism' has as its main purpose in justifying an ideology.¹⁹¹ However, it does not matter if Koselleck does not believe in the concept 'postmodern', he still does not explain if he believes we are in a different era from what we normally call modern age, i.e. the 'long' nineteenth century. Koselleck does sometimes talk of eras or periods, but it is not clear what he means by that. Rather he seems to assume that since the conceptualisation process started we have been in a 'conceptual age', a sort of linguistic episteme, that we are still a part of. Periods are rather shorter time spans, e.g. decades under one ruler or similar. However, periods, epistemes or paradigms do not seem to be of importance for Koselleck's historiography,

¹⁸⁹ *ibid*, p.272

¹⁹⁰ Jordheim, pp.164-5

¹⁹¹ From Jordheim's footnotes it seems that this argument can be found in an interview with Koselleck from 1998. [Koselleck, Reinhart; 'Begriffsgeschichte, Sozialgeschichte, begriffene Geschichte. Reinhart Koselleck im Gespräch mit Christof Dipper' in *Neue Politische Literatur* 43 (1998), pp.187-205].

outside the pre-modern/modern division. The context surrounding a concept does not need a name, just a description and understanding.

The interdisciplinary and erudite pretensions of *Begriffsgeschichte* make Koselleck look like a modern man with old-fashioned visions. His interest is in making a synthesis of many different academic disciplines that in fact examine the same thing and joining them in one specialised field of *Begriffsgeschichte*. This seems to be in contrast to what happens in other disciplines where a specialisation is rather a narrowing of the field. *Begriffsgeschichte* is more of a classical erudite discipline where a great historical knowledge and a wide methodological understanding are needed. Koselleck also breaks with the tradition of keeping history a 'pure' discipline by their readiness to introduce a more social-scientific approach to history in addition to the more philological methodology. He has a vague notion of relativism, but the rest of his belief is strongly founded on modernist values. The way Koselleck states that postmodernism does not exist is just a fact that points out that he has not been influenced by postmodernist theories and that he does not care to refute those ideas. Koselleck might have started a new conceptual discourse that can start something new, perhaps even a new philosophy of history, but as a practitioner Koselleck just continued the work of his countrymen.

For Koselleck society and concepts are something that developed at the same time in the late eighteenth century. Social history and conceptual history thus both have a common history and are both offspring of modernity. Koselleck does not challenge earlier interpretations of the past. He only gives new reasons for these interpretations. Thus he offers a theoretical shift rather than a disciplinary change. 'The measurement and investigation of differences among or convergence of old concepts and modern cognitive categories is performed by *Begriffsgeschichte*. To this extent, *Begriffsgeschichte* – however varied its own methods and apart from its actual empirical yield – is a kind of propaedeutic for a historical epistemology.'¹⁹² It is more the epistemology than the discipline itself that is new with Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte*.

¹⁹² Koselleck (1985), p.268

6 *History of concepts as a critical philosophical attitude:*

Michel Foucault

*Foucault in an important sense replaced Marx as the analyst of power and of the relation to knowledge.*¹⁹³

Michel Foucault was a historian, a philosopher and a critic of society who used history of concepts as a critical tool. The fact that it is difficult to categorise him as either philosopher or historian is part of the interdisciplinary way of thinking that Irmeline Veit-Brause finds characteristic for the history of concepts.¹⁹⁴ Even if Foucault is seldom characterised as a historian of concepts – and that he might have found the characterisation a bit strange – he seems to fit nicely in with the wish Koselleck had for *Begriffsgeschichte* to be a critical and philosophical historical discipline. Koselleck claimed that history and philosophy together were the best forms of understanding. He wrote that 'Past facts and contemporary judgement are, within the practice of investigation, the terminological poles which correspond to objectivity and partiality in epistemology'.¹⁹⁵ This chapter will try to show that Foucault's combination of historian, philosopher and critic by a linguistic approach was very compatible with the histories-of-concepts approach, and that Foucault used conceptual investigation as a means of critique.

History, archaeology of knowledge and genealogy

The radical difference between Foucault's way of writing history – or in his own terms archaeology of knowledge – and traditional contemporary historiography, was that Foucault brought morality and politics back into historiography. He still undertook objective research to the extent that was

¹⁹³ Iggers, p.99

¹⁹⁴ Veit-Brause, Irmeline; 'The Interdisciplinary of History of Concepts – a bridge between disciplines' in *History of Concepts Newsletter* 6 (Spring 2003) [Internet version], p.8

¹⁹⁵ Koselleck (1985), p.152

possible, since all texts are influenced by the linguistic discourse in which they find themselves. Foucault was able to show that not everything had become clearer thanks to previous historiography; some ideas had been suppressed. Foucault wanted to become the liberator of suppressed ideas. This is the reason why Foucault was not interested in what has been done previously. Enough historiography from the suppressors' point of view has been written. Foucault thought we needed a liberated version. Ideally all approaches should be presented together to give a fuller perspective of the truth. Unfortunately, Foucault was too concerned with the liberated view that he forgot other ways of seeing things. It was not what he investigated, but his methods, that Foucault claimed to be new; archaeology of knowledge, genealogy and lastly, history as ethics. The archaeology and its archives are new ways of looking at the past, but the method used to acquire knowledge about the past was not necessarily new. Criticisms of Foucault that he was too personal are answered by Blanchot who emphasises that Foucault was a serious historian and that even in *The History of sexuality* 'he was to compose on subjects so intimate to him are ostensibly books of a studious historian rather than works of personal inquiry.'¹⁹⁶

Foucault can be classified as a historian because he wrote about the past. This does not necessarily make him a difficult theorist. Like all historians he had a certain agenda, but mostly he was a historian of concepts working with concepts synchronically and diachronically in the past and in connection both with the past and the present. To this extent his work must be seen to have some similarities with that of Koselleck. Foucault wrote a history of concepts where principles were very important. The author should ask questions of the texts, not only to interpret, but to understand more of human nature. It depends perhaps on what we want Foucault to be. O'Farrell mentions this difference in opinions on what Foucault was:

¹⁹⁶ Blanchot, Maurice 'Michel Foucault as I imagine him' in *Foucault/Blanchot* M. Foucault and M. Blanchot (New York: Zone Books, 1987), p.108

English-speaking critics feel that they have to *prove* that Foucault is a philosopher rather than something else. The French, who have a broader conception of what constitutes a suitable material for philosophy, do not put themselves to all this trouble, and those who describe him as a philosopher do not consider it is necessary to prove this classification. On the other hand, English-speaking critics are more willing to describe him as a historian – even if a somewhat unorthodox one.¹⁹⁷

While the British only later found him to be an unorthodox historian, he was welcomed as a historian by the French established milieu when his first book came out. Fernand Braudel praised *Folie et déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*¹⁹⁸ in *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*.¹⁹⁹ Thus, if it has been questioned later if Foucault really was a historian, it was not questioned at the time.

It seems as if historians are not comfortable with his rigid categories and that they correspond badly with other historical realities. Roth explains how extreme this critique has been: 'Foucault's critical history can be portrayed as an antihistory because it is attempting to make the present into past which we leave behind, and not into a history which we tightly embrace as our own. Hayden White's term for this project, a "disremembrance of things past," is an accurate one.'²⁰⁰

This view of Foucault as an extreme idealist portrayed as antihistorian, goes too far. Foucault creates new structures, but none without a historiographical foundation. Foucault's new structures in intellectual history can be compared to Braudel's own new structures in economic history. Foucault makes acknowledgement, in addition to the *Annales* School, to Georges Dumézil, historian of religion and Canguilhem, historian of science.²⁰¹

The history of science may nevertheless have been his main source of inspiration as there are mechanisms he is looking for, but which he assumes are closed because they were restricted in the discourse.

Although Foucault was disappointed by the lack of attention when he first published, his works became known later; especially after the success of

¹⁹⁷ O'Farrell, Clare; *Foucault. Historian or Philosopher?* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p.28

¹⁹⁸ The second edition of *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* was translated as *Madness and Civilization* in 1965

¹⁹⁹ O'Farrell, p.7

²⁰⁰ Roth, Michael S.; 'Foucault's "History of the Present"' in *History and Theory* 20 (1981) p.44

²⁰¹ Eribon, p.75

Les Mots et les choses. Three distinct groups of French writing came into existence in its wake: The first consisted of intellectuals such as Sartre, Aron, Barthes, Serres and Canguilhem. Then came critique from Marxists, existentialist and from established psychiatrists. Last were the 'secondary' intellectuals; journalist writing intellectual "gossip columns".²⁰² The general tendency made historians curious about Foucault's new method of writing, or if not his writing, then at least the question he asked. Nilsson writes that Foucault has made a good impact on historiography, making it more self-critical. After Foucault, it has been necessary to ask questions such as: Within which discourse is my work? Which powers are legitimate through my work as a historian?²⁰³

In contrast to everyone that criticises the fact the Foucault was a too original historian, Munslow encourages us to see Foucault as a different kind of historian; a deconstructionist historian:

In spite of his assault on the epistemology of traditional history, like all historians (including deconstructionist historians) Foucault accepts the need to study the evidence in the archive. The essential proviso is that history's facts are understood primarily as the epistemic discursive creations both of people in the past *and* of the historian, written as the relationship the historian believes exists between words and things in any episteme he/she studies. This means that his/her understanding of the data results from, and can only be revealed in, his/her composed or invented narrative which itself ultimately a function of the tropic structure of his/her own age.²⁰⁴

Munslow, however, is the historian behind the concept of deconstructionist historiography, and he uses Foucault for extreme philosophical purposes.

Foucault was a linguistic historian and saw the importance of language as a bridge between the past and us. In *Madness and Civilization* he writes:

As for a common language, there is no such thing; there is no such thing any longer; the constitution of madness as a mental illness, at the end of the eighteenth century, affords the evidence of a broken dialogue, posits the separation as already effected, and thrusts into oblivion all those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax in which the exchange

²⁰² O'Farrell, p.12

²⁰³ Nilsson, Roddy; 'Den närvarande frånvaron eller i väntn på Foucault: En diskussion om Foucault och den svenska historie disciplinen.' [The Present Absence or Waiting for Foucault: A Discussion of Foucault and the Swedish Historiography] in *Historisk Tidskrift* [Sweden] (2000), p.205

²⁰⁴ Munslow, p.126

between madness and reason was made. The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason about madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence. I have not tried to write the history of that language, but rather the archaeology of that silence.²⁰⁵

The archaeology of silence turns out to be the archaeology of languages which is not psychiatric, but which still talks of madness. In *The Order of Things* Foucault writes: 'Languages, though imperfect knowledge themselves, are the faithful memory of the progress of knowledge towards perfection.'²⁰⁶ It is a work of a combination of time and word. Clifford compares this to Hegel's writing, and writes that Foucault saw

himself as engaged in the writing of a "history of the present," not of the past. Perhaps this is because he tacitly recognized that any written history could not be a re-presentation of the past, but is in fact a moment of ordinarily presentation – that written history is itself an inscription of temporal space.²⁰⁷

This collapses the distinction between time and word, and this is why Clifford thinks it is possible to compare Foucault's view of the past with Hegel's view of history as the privilege of man as both maker and writer of history.

Critical methodology of the past

It is the methodologies of archaeology of knowledge and genealogy that can be seen as being methodologies of conceptual history. 'Archaeology describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive.'²⁰⁸ Flynn makes an important point:

Foucault's first major works were 'archaeologies' of madness, clinical medicine, and the social sciences, respectively. Rather than study the 'arche,' origin, these archaeologies examine the 'archive,' by which he means "system that establish statements (*énoncés*) as events (with their own conditions, domain of appearance) and as things (with their own possibility and filed of use)".²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Foucault, Michel, *Madness and Civilization*. (London: Routledge Classics, 2001), p.xii

²⁰⁶ Foucault (2002 I), p.96

²⁰⁷ Clifford, Michael; "Hegel and Foucault: Toward a History Without Man" in *Clio*, Fall 1999; 29,1 pp.21-2

²⁰⁸ Foucault, (2002 II), p.148

²⁰⁹ Flynn, p.29 Flynn's definition of the archive is taken from Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.128

Genealogy is the method that studies origins. Foucault wrote this about the archive:

Between the *language* (*langue*) that defines the system of constructing possible sentences, and the *corpus* that passively collects the words that are spoken, the *archive* defines a particular level: that of a practice that causes multiplicity of statements to emerge as so many regular events, as so many things to be dealt with and manipulated. It does not have the weight of tradition; and it does not constitute a library of all libraries, outside time and place; nor does it in the welcoming oblivion that opens up to all new speech the operational field of its freedom; between tradition and oblivion, it reveals the rules of practice that enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification. It is *the general system of the formation and transformation of statements*.²¹⁰

Archaeology is uncovering layers and already while writing his second dissertation on Kant, Foucault uses this methodology and describes it as underlying geology.²¹¹ 'Archaeology' is a science collecting facts about the past. It is objective and lets the objects speak for themselves. Archaeology of knowledge aims to attach utterances to the appropriate discourse, just as more traditional archaeology locates objects in a stratum. Compared with history, archaeology looks at different sources. While a historian would use descriptive and explanatory sources, an archaeologist of knowledge uses primary sources not necessarily discussing the period itself, but just any topic, and thus interprets between the lines. Foucault was critical of the traditional historiographer here, as primary sources and interpretation are also part of their work. However, Foucault shocked other historians by his choice of source material. Foucault claimed that archaeology was a more pure form of historiography than history, because one is looking directly at past discourse, not through the eyes of someone who is part of this discourse. The archaeologist has a more objective attitude to the past than a person writing contemporary history. Foucault does not think it necessary to get rid of history in favour of archaeology, but these two disciplines have to work side by side.

However, while Flynn here refers to Foucault's emphasis on the focus on events, Blanchot includes 'events' in concepts that Foucault would oppose.

²¹⁰ Foucault (2002 II) p.146

²¹¹ Eribon, p.110

[By 'The Order of the discourse'] Foucault proposed *event, series, regularity*, and *condition of possibility* as the notion he would use to oppose, term by term, those principles he thought had dominated the traditional history of ideas; event was opposed to creation, series to unit, regularity to originality, and conditions of possibility to meanings.²¹²

Foucault was very interested in Nietzsche and especially his *Genealogy of Morals*. This inspired Foucault's article 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History'. 'Genealogy' is thus not a new concept from Foucault but something he develops from Nietzsche.

With the shift to the 'genealogical' method and a more explicit concern with the theory of power, Foucault's conception of the other is significantly altered. The other is no longer conceived as a shadowy, contestatory force on the margins of society, but as an effect of the power relations that permeate the social realm.²¹³

Genealogy is diachronic research through the past with one object in mind to find the roots of a modern phenomenon. To some extent this can be seen as the method of *Begriffsgeschichte* by following one concept or institution through history. What Nietzsche found, and Foucault after him, was that the roots of a phenomenon can be totally different from how the phenomenon is perceived today. Nietzsche found that our concept of morals is based on a Christian way of coping with being the underdog. In the same way, Foucault found that this perception of sexuality has roots that are quite corrupted, and it is no longer the same concept as found in antiquity. Thus, we should no longer pretend it to be the same concept. The concepts change through its encounters with different discourses. Genealogy is a discipline that shows us that history is not necessarily what we think it to be. It is clear that because meanings change through history, we do have to understand the discourses to be able to understand the past.

Concepts are related in epistemes. They have meaning dependent on clusters of which they are members. Foucault has not looked at political concepts, but he has looked at how general concepts create power. Concepts have power to the extent that they are part of creating a discourse, but Foucault would say that it is the discourse that forms the concepts rather than

²¹² Blanchot, p.76

²¹³ McNay, p.6

the other way round. Just as sciences are linked more by their belonging to an episteme than to their discipline equivalent in other epistemes, the meaning of a concept will have more in common with other concepts in the same episteme than with its "identity" through history. This is why both archaeology and genealogy are important; one speaks of the concept from a synchronic perspective, and the other from a diachronic perspective.

Foucault can be classified as a contextualist because of his discourse analysis. Perhaps Foucault did not use the word context, but instead uses words like discourse, archive and episteme, because they are limited contexts. Foucault seems to be very interested in limits, and when context is limited, they become a boundary rather than a possibility. These limits make historical interpretation easier because what to look for is defined. In *L'ordre de discours*²¹⁴, his inaugural lecture to the *Collège de France*, Foucault sees the academic life as having these same boundaries of excluding a large part of the population. To a large extent, the mentality of the whole population must be the context in which the discourse is. The context is something to which all the units in the discourse are relative and thus must traditionally be seen as something fixed. The discourse, however, is a living object. Discourses as such are not a tool for Foucault. They are a study in themselves. However, they carry the historical understanding for which Foucault is looking. Foucault used discourses as a means to understand the mentality of a period. The mentality and the discourse can be seen as one. Perhaps it is right to categorise Foucault as an historian of discourses, as Koselleck would be an historian of concepts. It is a tool for understanding, but it is also the main focus of investigation as they have meanings in themselves.

Looking at Foucault's thoughts as an expression for our discourse would parallel his view of looking at other historical works.²¹⁵ The French intellectual environment that Foucault worked in was shaped by French interest in Marxism and, in history, this meant the influence of the *Annales* School. Foucault himself was also influenced by the *Annales* even though he, according to Munslow, later became strongly anti-positivist and anti-empirical.

²¹⁴ Foucault, Michel, *Diskursens orden: tiltredelsesforelesning holdt ved Collège de France 2. desember 1970* translation by Espen Schaanning (Oslo: Spartacus, 1999)

²¹⁵ Nilsson, p.197

This *Annaliste* influence stimulated a life-long constructionist desire to discover collective cultural practices.²¹⁶ At the same time there was, according to O'Farrell, a natural change in historical understanding in 1960s France: France felt like an outsider because it felt it had lost its historical mission. Technological and human sciences progressed rapidly as a new consumer age began.²¹⁷ It is obvious that Foucault's thought has been considered as running against this tradition. He never taught history, but rather a diversity of philosophical and psychological topics, where he used the past to find examples. He broke with the tradition of using historiography for pure political and societal explanations.

Foucault distinguishes himself from other structuralists by his understanding of the past. Foucault has a defragmented view of the past; by way of example he neither believes in History nor histories, but in units of discourse. This is emphasised with a focus on the discontinuity within history. When in *Les Mots et les choses* he writes about the disciplines of economics, biology and grammatology, he does not see a continuous history that can be viewed as a progress towards what these disciplines are today. Instead he sees discourses at a given time discussing the same sort of questions even though they may be in different disciplines. There is a definitive break between the different discourses. Yet Foucault is less and less austere about these discontinuities. The epistemes are theories that he values strictly in the beginning of his scholarship, but later he is more open to developments and progress. The defragmentation must be seen as something different from structuralism. Structuralists usually look for continuous structures that can explain a total history. Foucault is more concerned with synchronic structures. The discourses are synchronic structures that must be seen as layers if one views history as a line. These layers are not necessarily linked to each other, but are separated by regularities and language.

Foucault is known as the discontinuity historian, because his episteme theory states that history is not a continuous string of events, but one episteme

²¹⁶ Munslow, pp.130-1

²¹⁷ O'Farrell, p.6

after another where ideas do not continue into the new episteme. O'Farrell writes this about discontinuity:

[T]he basis of Foucault's historiography was a principle of *discontinuity* (the methodological equivalent of the limit), a discontinuity which also underlay his political and ethical views. This principle, however, changed considerably in appearance throughout his career. Beginning with discontinuity on a large historical scale, discontinuity shrank to a smaller and smaller scale to re-emerge in a highly complex series of transformations. In the 1970s he changed the entire focus of his discussion on discontinuity from the arrangement of historical events and 'discourse' to the larger arrangement of 'theory', 'power', and the role of the intellectual. By this stage, the particles of discontinuity had become so fine as to almost produce the effect of continuity.²¹⁸

All the same, as O'Farrell writes, his view changes to become more and more continuous. So even if the archaeology is a historical view based on discontinuity, genealogy is not. In genealogy, is it necessary to believe that ideas have a continuous development to be able to find the root of a concept. The concept of change does not have an important place in Foucault's ideas. Traditional historians are interested in change, but Foucault is more interested in looking at the stationary. Historians normally look at change because that is where one can find the answers to what was and what comes, in addition to a time of change often highlight features of a society. As Foucault does not believe in gradual change, he cannot find the same sort of change. Change is the stage between one episteme or discourse and another. However, this stage does not exist; or rather it is extremely short. The change from one episteme to another is not gradual but sudden. It is not clear from Foucault what triggers these changes. When Foucault writes historiography he still needs his own ideas to form a coherent set. To be able to show discontinuity he must believe in the concept of continuity and coherence. Chaos cannot be described without order.

History of concepts as philosophy

When trying to determine whether Foucault was a historian or a philosopher we should bear in mind Maurice Blanchot's words:

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.47

What seems to be the difficult – and privileged – position of Foucault might be the following: do we know who he is, since he doesn't call himself (he is on a perpetual slalom course between traditional philosophy and the abandonment of any pretension to seriousness) either a sociologist or a historian or a structuralist or a thinker or a metaphysician?²¹⁹

Foucault was a thinker who influenced many disciplines in the second half of the twentieth century. It has always been difficult to place him within one defined discipline, and this probably pleased him. He has been used within literary theory, sociology, queer theory, psychology amongst other fields. It is therefore easy to criticise him for being more of a philosopher than an historian. As McNay mentions: 'These literary and historical studies are, in turn, informed by philosophical reflection and the nature of rationality, truth and power, and on what it means to be an individual in modern society.'²²⁰ He is right to assert that no matter what Foucault's object is, there will always be a philosophical foundation on which to commence. Flynn goes even further and claims that Foucault's historical method can be most easily compared to a philosophical style.²²¹

History and politics are linked in Foucault to the extent that he understands that other historians are political as well. Foucault was disappointed that his books at first did not create a greater political impact, however, this changed in later years. Foucault is also aware of how closely Marxism and history were linked in France when he started writing. It is unclear if Foucault believes it is an advantage that history and politics have a close relationship. It must be seen as a disadvantage as the power structures rule history, but rather Foucault states that this is the way it is. The advantage must be that all historians have the same possibility to make a political impact. Foucault himself, indeed, wished to make an impact with his writing. As Foucault was a historian on the verge of philosophy and political science, his historiography might not qualify as being placed with more traditional historiography, but the same fact rules for all historians. Foucault's historical writing is also very relativistic and some criteria will necessarily be needed to make criteria for the choosing of writing; these choices will be political.

²¹⁹ Blanchot, p.93

²²⁰ McNay, p.1

²²¹ Flynn, p.38

Foucault probably thought it best to be aware of the political viewpoint held by an author.

Just as history is linked to politics, it is also linked to philosophy. The past becomes one way of understanding humans, just as philosophy is. Foucault dealt with philosophy all his life, but wrote historical books. For him it was just the way of explaining human action. Nevertheless, the reason why Foucault has been criticised for being more a philosopher than a historian is because he used history for a purpose. Perhaps it is because he was connected to history of mentalities that Foucault is difficult to categorise between philosophy and history. He plays an active part in his histories as he took sides in what he wrote; he was both a philosopher and a historian. It was not one of Foucault's goals to be objective, as that is impossible. Foucault was not afraid to ask moral questions, and to answer them. It seems that he regretted other historians not doing the same.

Although Foucault was a historian, he used his work for contemporary purposes. He always wanted to make an impact with his writing; just as a philosopher. However, his writing does not have the same purpose as historical and moral Enlightenment writing. Foucault was more a personal writer, than a political writer. When Foucault classified his writing in three stages, he described them as archaeology, genealogy and ethics. All of these approaches must be seen as having a contemporary foundation. They are pragmatic historical writing, written for a contemporary audience to make an impact. When he wrote the archaeologies he claimed to be true to the past, but, in his later works, the past seemed to become more and more of a tool and the contemporary aspect becomes more and more important. Genealogy is written to explain the present, and the ethical historiography is written to understand the world in an ethical way. The past and art are disciplines to be studied to get to know mankind better.

Gutting comments that Foucault did not seem to live up to his own standards: 'For it seems that archaeology claims to be precisely the sort of neutral, ahistorical theoretical knowledge to which Foucault's later

philosophical project allows no place.²²² Perhaps Gutting is right that Foucault was more of a philosopher than he intended. Foucault sets out to be a theorist based on contextualism, but then he became interested in the theoretical. Gutting seems, nonetheless, to draw parallels between the neutral and the ahistorical yet Foucault did not do that. Foucault looked for a neutral foundation, not based on traditional historical understanding, but one that is not ahistorical. The neutrality of the archaeological method is based on looking at objects independent of progress and development; i.e. without time, but it is historical because it is part of a historical context to which it needs to be seen to belong and which is necessary for a understanding of the meaning.

Foucault as a critical postmodernist

As Foucault saw it, the past had been misused. History had been used to explain things that were not necessarily morally acceptable. History had given legitimacy. History had also been misunderstood because historians had failed to see the heart of discourses. A linguistic understanding was necessary to understand mentality, but mentality had not yet been considered important before the linguistic turn. Perhaps it is possible to say that Foucault did a conceptual or linguistic turn within structuralist historiography. The past can only be properly understood if we try to understand the mentality behind it. This is an attempt at pure history, but Foucault puts ideology into it himself. In his later works he criticises history and historical understanding as a form that gives and secures power. It had thus far been the ruling classes that wrote history and therefore have a power-historiography been written. Foucault wants to show the history of the powerless. The past must have some value in itself, but not in a historicist understanding of it. As Foucault saw it, history has never been able to tell the truth; therefore is it important to invent this new discipline of archaeology of knowledge, which will dig to present facts, but then be honest with the story it tells. The archaeologist of knowledge digs in the archives to discover the different levels of discourses.

²²² Gutting, Gary: *Michel Foucault's archaeology of scientific reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999), p.266

Historical time for Foucault is a structure rather than an experience. Historical time is where one finds historical objects. In the same way that a traditional archaeologist works with a period, Foucault works with a discourse. For him 'period' is a mistaken classification: one should look for the mechanism which defines a period and he would therefore call it a discourse, or the overall episteme. Historical time is to some extent non-existent. The past is no longer a living organism, but rather a dead text. Archaeology is like working with the same passage of the text finding its meaning and thus understanding the single word. Genealogy, on the other hand, is like looking through the whole text, searching for traces of a word/concept and find when it was first mentioned. It might be a linguistic turn that made Foucault treat the past as a text, as language is a structure that can most easily be interpreted while in a text. Historical time is thus abandoned to give easier access to interpretations of the concepts that are necessary for historical understanding.

Despite Foucault's removal of historical time, thus making duration of little importance, sequence and coherence are still important; perhaps even more important than in traditional historiography because sequence is an important structure. Sequence is what makes a system in a genealogy and also what puts meaning in a discourse. A discourse is a coherent set of thoughts, and a genealogy is a coherent sequence of development. For Foucault, however, it is not necessary to include temporality to make a context coherent.

Structuralism has founded a classical opposition to historism. Foucault was a part of the linguistic turn in the way that he was very much influenced by structuralism. He never agreed to being either a structuralist or a post-structuralist: he did not like classifications as they are limiting. However, being in a structuralist tradition, he valued the structures found in language, as the possibilities and limitations that languages create, but he was also inspired by structuralist historians like the *Annaliste* School, who look at economic and political structures in a wider picture than event history. Foucault was influenced by new ways of writing histories of science and mentalities, and he started by looking at the history of madness and psychiatry. It is also obvious that he was influenced by his philosophical knowledge. He made a translation of Kant and argued that Kantian thoughts must be seen as prerequisites for the

linguistic turn. The 'linguistic turn' was not a concept that Foucault uses, but his kind of structuralism must be seen as part of it.

Munslow is of the opinion that Foucault must be seen as part of the post-modern condition as his writing as it 'lays open the figurative and narrative strategies that authorise their conceptualizations, to reveal what Hayden White calls the deep structure of their linguistic protocols – the tropes.'²²³ This historical understanding has given up the possibility of grasping original truth. Foucault did not want to be categorised as postmodernist.

[Foucault] claimed not to understand what problem(s) the term *modernity* represented, since in relation to it he was presumed to be either a postmodernist or antimodernist and he did not regard himself as either one. Rather, he saw himself as a modernist, where modernism is understood as more of an attitude than a historical period, as "a permanent critique of our historical era" in the pursuit of enlightenment.²²⁴

All the same, Foucault would suit the definition of post-modernity that Bauman uses, where the role of the analytical strategy used is that of the interpreter. Yet, Bauman adds

Instead of being orientated towards selecting the best social order, this strategy is aimed at facilitating communication between autonomous (sovereign) participants. [...] It is vitally important to note that the post-modern strategy does not imply the elimination of the modern one; on the contrary, it cannot be conceived without the continuation of the latter.²²⁵

So Foucault is right in feeling like a modernist even though he is part of the post-modern. Foucault's history is modern in its focus on system and structures, but his historical understanding and the way he looks at the past is fragmented and post-modern.

Foucault did not believe in progress in history. Perhaps this is what most clearly does not make him a modernist. Changes and developments have happened in history, but not necessarily for the better. Things are relative to their context. Moreover things that were appreciated earlier might not be appreciated any longer. There are two main points to Foucault's thoughts: one

²²³ Munslow p.121

²²⁴ Kelly, Michael; 'Introduction' in *Critique and Power. Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* ed. M.Kelly (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), p.3

²²⁵ Bauman, p.5

linked to archaeology and the other to genealogy. Archaeology shows that sciences have not developed from the Enlightenment to the present day. They were in a different discourse and had other aims with their "scientific" approach. In genealogy it is clear from the phenomena that Foucault investigates whether our society might have developed more problems rather than the opposite. Perhaps there has been positive technological progress, but psychologically or morally we might have had a bad development. As Coe writes 'Genealogy instead exposes the contingency of past events, and the fragmentation of self-consciousness.'²²⁶ The changes in history have been caused by power and thus not always for the reasons of progress. However, the people in power will always claim that they are making progress; at least people from modernity onwards. In Foucault's view it should be possible to have progress within smaller disciplines, and for a shorter amount of time, but there are no overall progress in history.

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault wrote that he sets out to write about the experience of order and its modes of being.²²⁷ The context is probably defining the experience a person has, both today and previously. The discourse shapes the experience it is possible to have. The experience of the past can only be grasped through collective mentality studies. However, Andersen claims that Foucault could be interested in true experience, because to 'Foucault there is only one level, which is that of appearance. Foucault focused on the statements as they emerge, as they come into being. It is crucial to him never to reduce them to something else.'²²⁸

Perhaps it is not possible totally to understand the experience of the past, no matter how much the historic mentality is investigated. Foucault wrote his books because of experiences he had had in his own life; he did not then expect people to understand his experiences, but understand the thought he managed to write from this experience. Perhaps he thus did not believe any exchange of experience is possible, neither between people within a discourse, nor between people in different discourses. To be interested in the experience

²²⁶ Coe, Cynthia D.; 'Domesticating Time: Two Contemporary Continental Critiques of History' in *Clio* 30:4 2001, p.429

²²⁷ Foucault (2002 I), p.xxiii

²²⁸ Andersen, Niels Åkerstrøm; *Discursive Analytical Strategies* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2003), p.2

of the people in the past seems to imply historicism. Since Foucault was interested in the past for his personal and contemporary reasons, he cannot really be interested in experience. When it comes to a present experience of the past, Foucault believes that this experience did not necessarily portray a true picture.

Conclusion

This dissertation has tried to show that the study of concepts has been important in historiography after the linguistic turn. For all its important contribution to historiography, it is a methodology that has much unused potential. Concepts have in the linguistic turn revealed that 'if we wish to grasp how someone sees the world – what distinctions they draw, what classifications they draw, what classification they accept – what we need to know is not what words they use but rather what concepts they possess.'²²⁹ The study of concepts has not always been related to an identity as a conceptual historian. As many have rightly connected history of concepts with *Begriffsgeschichte*, not all historians who have worked with concepts but not felt attached to this German discipline have defined themselves as conceptual historians. Followers of *Begriffsgeschichte* have made the history of concepts into a growing discipline of analysis of political and social concepts. Another clear discipline of history of concepts is the style of historiography written or inspired by Foucault, for instance Stuart Clark and Erling Sandmo. Foucault was very determined not to write traditional history of ideas and instead he worked on a deeper level of meaning. This made him conscious of his focus on concepts. In contrast are the historians that have written social, cultural or gender history, perhaps even inspired by Foucault, but have not deliberately worked on concepts; to these people the methodology has merely shown itself to be a helpful approach. In particular, gender historians and social historians working on 'class' have been focused on the concept they have studied to such an extent that they have forgotten that it is a concept, even though they have analysed it both linguistically and conceptually.

²²⁹ Skinner (2002), p.159

Intellectual history has been influenced by what Skinner famously wrote in 1969; that

no agent can eventually be said to have meant or done something which he could never have brought to accept as a correct description of what he had meant or done. This special authority of an agent over his intentions does not exclude, of course, the possibility that an observer might be in a position to give a fuller or more convincing account of the agent's behaviour than he could give himself.²³⁰

Understanding that historiography is part of intellectual history, I have tried to keep this remark in mind when defining historians of concepts. I have not set out to define people as 'historians of concepts' who would not accept the term, but as this is a discipline that is rather undefined, not many historians would identify with it. The term is not meant as making straw-men historiography out of a variety of historical approaches, but rather I have wanted to emphasise similarities. Other historians, in particular those involved in the HPSCG, also talk of 'history of concepts' as a school of thought. I have, in spite of this, tried to show that there are historians outside this group who also should be included in the definition of 'history of concepts'.

In the theory chapter I defined histories of concepts as having three characteristics: a focus on signifiers, both synchronic and diachronic analysis, and a philosophical and political awareness of the historian. This is what I have been looking for in the books analysed in this dissertation. There are, however, very few who fit this definition perfectly. This dissertation must therefore be seen as much an attempt to look at the possibility of this approach as a description of the few attempts at such a methodology. The greatest difference between the definition and practice was found in cultural history, but this is not surprising since cultural history took a semiotic rather than semantic turn. When it comes to gender history, I believe we will see more gender history being influenced by linguistic gender theory combining the analytical and synchronic approach with diachronic historical development.²³¹

²³⁰ Skinner, Quentin; 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas' in *History and Theory* 8 (1969), p.28

²³¹ See Moi, Torill; *What is a woman?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

The critical aspect of 'history of concepts' becomes a paradox as it tries to uncover the power structures in history, but at the same time 'history of concepts' is an academic discipline which has power in its actions. Foucault is a classic example of this and Cynthia D. Coe has shown the inconsistency in the fact that history itself is a technique of discipline, just as Foucault uses the term in *Discipline and Punish*.²³² Historiography is in this light not about finding the truth at all, but a mechanism created in the present to suppress unwanted ideas. Foucault becomes a victim of his own ideas. However, Foucault uses his power as an historian to promote the view of 'the Other'; the mad, the victim, the homosexual. On the other hand, not all historians of concepts are as troubled by the problems of this paradox. Along the same lines, there is a paradox that historians of concepts criticise older historical discourses for not being inclusive, but forgets that to be able to understand the importance of history of concepts, one has to be part of the linguistic episteme. It is necessary to be part of the 'discourse' to understand Skinner, Koselleck, Clark and Riley, and thus a large audience is kept outside the discourse which 'history of concepts' creates. Although concepts, vocabulary and discourse are analysed, a discipline will also create a new discourse with its new concepts.

In Norway, 'history of concepts' has shown to be of present-day interest as the centenary of Norwegian independence from Sweden in 1905 has brought history of concepts to the attention of Norwegian historians and journalists. This summer has brought two interesting articles; the first is a review by Iver Neuman of two doctoral theses on the concepts of 'nationality' in the weekly intellectual newspaper *Morgenbladet*.²³³ This review article demonstrates that history of concepts is being investigated and that it is an interest in it. The second is an article in the Norwegian historical journal, *Historisk Tidsskrift* where Halvard Leira writes about the peace discourse in Norway in the years before 1905. Central concepts are *fred* ('peace') and *folket* ('people'). He seems to be aware of the vocabulary changing, but he does not

²³² Coe, p.426

²³³ Neuman, Iver; 'Politikkens "vi"' [The "We" of Politics] in *Morgenbladet* 30.07.2004 pp.20-21. The doctoral dissertations he reviews are Helge Danielsen's ' "Fædrelandssind" og "Fosterlandshet": Nasjonsoppfatninger i de norske og svenske høyrebevegelsene i 1885-1905' and Jacob Westberg's 'Den nationella drömträdgården. Den stora berättelsen om egna nationen i svensk och britisk Europadebatt'.

mention this. He is aware how the two concepts of 'peace' and 'people' are linked but not of their individual ambiguity.²³⁴ This article seems to have the potential to be developed into good and critical history of concepts.

Compared with other contemporary historiographical trends, the history of concepts has an advantage of not being as vague as history of memory or identity. Although concepts are dealing with something as abstract as meaning, it is still quite distinct because it is founded in linguistic structures. Still, history of concepts is more of a historiographical attitude or approach than a different discipline. It is therefore not meant as an alternative to traditional historiography, but an addition. This new critical attitude has thus potential to penetrate various historical disciplines; cultural and gender history has been suggested in this dissertation, but there are probably others as well. Another aspect that could be of interest is to investigate the relationship between textualist historiography and concepts. Except for Michel Foucault and Stuart Clark, most historians portrayed here have an entirely contextual attitude. Perhaps concepts so far have been looked at more from their historical background than their linguistic powers. Perhaps, too, this is where the strength of histories of concepts lies; that they still have more in common with traditional historiography than fictional writing.

²³⁴ Leira, Halvard; ' "Hele vort Folk er naturlige og fødte Fredsvenner"', ["All Our People are Born Friends of Peace"] in *Historisk Tidsskrift* 83 (2004), pp.153-80

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